

August 21, 2006

ORGANIZATION: Nuclear Energy Institute

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF THE LICENSE RENEWAL MEETING BETWEEN THE
U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION STAFF AND THE
NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE LICENSE RENEWAL TASK FORCE

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff and the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) License Renewal Task Force met on June 28, 2006, to discuss generic license renewal topics, lessons learned from the audit process, and license renewal process improvements. Enclosure 1 provides a listing of the conference call participants. Enclosure 2 contains the agenda for the conference call. A summary of the discussions follows:

1. Evolution of the license renewal program

The NRC staff's approach to license renewal application (LRA) reviews will be changing in the future as a result of the number and timing of announced LRA submittals and demands on NRC staff resources. In the past, the NRC normally budgeted for six LRAs per year. With only four LRAs announced each year for Fiscal Years (FY) 2007 and 2008, the resources needed for reviews are significantly reduced compared to FY 2006. However, with six named applications, and possibly a seventh, to be submitted in FY 2009, the resources needed for FY 2009 reviews greatly increase over those needed in FY 2008. The current NRC LRA review process uses a combination of staff and contractor resources. Because of the large variations in staff and contractor resource needs during the FY 2006 through FY 2009 time period, the staff intends to revise its LRA review process to preserve experienced staff in FY 2007–2008 to support the FY 2009 reviews. Therefore, FY 2007–2008 reviews will be performed primarily using in-house NRC staff without the contractor support that has been used in the past.

This change in the review process requires that applicants and NRC staff strictly adhere to review schedules as the staff will have less flexibility to accommodate perturbations in the review process that could previously be accommodated with increased contractor support. Applicants must ensure that its documentation and staff are ready to support the NRC audit team when it arrives onsite. The audit teams may not be able to accommodate additional unplanned audits without potentially impacting the schedule. Demands on audit team resources will also reduce the time available to close open items remaining after the onsite audits. Open items remaining when the audit team leaves the site may have to be addressed through supplemental applicant submittals and the ongoing request for additional information process.

Review of applications will always have first priority for the staff. Generic activities documenting technical and process improvements, though important, may be delayed. Lessons learned and process improvements will continue to be discussed during the monthly telephone conferences and quarterly meetings to provide timely feedback to stakeholders. The staff is also re-evaluating the number and timing of public meetings to determine if improvements can be made to the process.

2. NEI draft guidance development

A. Implementation of 10 CFR 54.37(b)

NEI stated that they planned to submit a white paper addressing implementation of the final safety analysis report update requirements of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR) Section 54.37(b). NEI wants to clarify the interpretation and implementation of the term "newly identified" in §54.37(b). The white paper was subsequently submitted to the NRC by NEI letter dated July 5, 2006 (ADAMS Accession No. ML061860750).

B. License renewal application acceptance review

NEI submitted a letter dated June 16, 2006 (ADAMS Accession No. ML061670254), addressing the sufficiency, or acceptance review requirements for docketing of an LRA. The letter discussed the NRC's acceptance review checklist contained in Table 1.1-1 of the license renewal standard review plan (SRP), NUREG-1800, as well as an NRC letter dated April 29, 2005 (ADAMS Accession No. ML051190496). The April 29, 2005, letter stated that it contained a list of items compiled by the NRC staff to facilitate the performance of effective and efficient sufficiency reviews for LRAs. As discussed at the meeting, the staff agrees with NEI's position contained in its June 16, 2006, letter that the legal criteria for determining whether an LRA is acceptable for docketing are contained in Table 1.1-1 of the SRP which is based on the requirements of 10 CFR Part 54. The wording of the April 29, 2005, letter should have been more clear in stating that the items identified were to improve the format and content of future LRAs, resulting in a more efficient review process. The staff agrees with NEI that the letter does not expand the acceptance criteria for docketing an LRA beyond that required by Part 54 and Table 1.1-1 of the SRP.

The NEI letter also contained suggestions regarding development of sufficiency review criteria, communications with applicants on sufficiency issues prior to submittal and during the sufficiency review, and identifying items to improve LRA quality and completeness. Based on discussions during the meeting clarifying the criteria for an acceptance review and the intent of the April 29, 2005, letter, a joint industry and staff task force is not needed to develop additional sufficiency (acceptance) review criteria. Regarding communications with applicants on sufficiency issues prior to submittal and identifying items to improve LRA quality, the monthly telephone calls and quarterly meetings are now being used to provide timely feedback to the industry as information is identified. If an applicant has a plant-specific concern with its LRA prior to submittal, the staff has in the past and continues to encourage applicants to arrange pre-submittal telephone calls or meetings as needed to discuss the concern. The staff also continues to communicate with applicants during the acceptance review process and has allowed applicants to supplement their LRA (if it can be done in a reasonable period of time) in order for an LRA to be found acceptable for docketing.

As discussed during this meeting and the subsequent July 27, 2006, telephone conference, this meeting summary will be considered the staff's response to NEI's June 16, 2006, letter.

3. Generic Aging Lessons Learned Report aging management program XI.E6 for electrical cable connections

A draft of NEI's position on this program is contained in a white paper it is developing which will be submitted in the future.

4. Environmental topics

- A. NEI severe accident mitigation alternatives (SAMA) guidance interpretation

The staff summarized a conference call with Entergy that was held on June 20, 2006, to discuss requests for additional information on the SAMA analyses for the Vermont Yankee and Pilgrim LRAs. The conference call had been held to discuss 12 items that appeared to the applicant to go beyond the bounds of the SAMA review guidance being developed by NEI and the NRC. The staff indicated that opportunities for detailed clarification of the review guidance had been identified during the conference call and suggested that improvements could be made before the guidance is endorsed. Industry representatives and the staff agreed that another meeting should be scheduled to explore this issue further.

- B. New plant environmental report overlap with license renewal

A question was raised regarding the scope of LRA environmental reviews for sites in which the applicant plans to submit an application for an early site permit (ESP). Would the two reviews be treated separately or would the additional reactor need to be addressed in the LRA supplemental environmental impact statement? This question would apply to the planned submittal of the Vogtle LRA by Southern Nuclear Company in June 2007 and an ESP in August 2006. In this case, the evaluation of impacts performed for license renewal would need to consider the cumulative impact of a potential new reactor.

- C. Potential interim staff guidance (ISG) on tritium

As discussed in the May 31, 2006, telephone conference, tritium was found in groundwater at a number of nuclear power plants and the staff informed NEI that future license renewal environmental audits will include review of onsite documentation for plant-specific experience. The staff's review of onsite documentation is to confirm that there is not any new and significant information that would preclude the staff from treating the issue as a Category I issue in accordance with 10 CFR Part 51. Unless an applicant identifies new and significant information, specific information on tritium contamination is not needed in their application.

5. New issues under development

A. Status of the proposed ISG on BWR Mark I drywell shells

The proposed ISG on BWR Mark I drywell shells was issued for comment by May 3, 2006, letter to NEI (ADAMS Accession No. ML061120001) and published in the Federal Register on May 9, 2006 (71 FR 27010). NEI provided comments on the proposed ISG in a letter dated June 7, 2006 (ADAMS Accession No. ML061650266). The staff is addressing NEI's comments and plans to issue the final ISG in fall 2007.

B. Potential new issues

No new items were discussed.

6. Public participation

No members of the public participated in the meeting.

/RA/

Stephen T. Hoffman, Senior Project Manager
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Project No. 690

Enclosures:
As Stated

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AND THE NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE
JUNE 28, 2006

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AGENDA
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AND THE NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE
JUNE 28, 2006

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Lead</u>
1. Evolution of the license renewal program	NRC
2. NEI draft guidance development	NEI
A. Implementation of 10 CFR 54.37(b)	
B. License renewal application acceptance review	
3. Generic Aging Lessons Learned Report aging management program XI.E6 for electrical cable connections	NEI
4. Environmental topics	
A. NEI severe accident mitigation alternatives guidance interpretation	NRC
B. New plant environmental report overlap with license renewal	NEI
C. Potential interim staff guidance (ISG) on tritium	NRC
5. New issues under development	
A. Status of the proposed ISG on BWR Mark I drywell shells	NRC
B. Potential new issues	NRC/NEI
6. Public participation	

ENCLOSURE 2

NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE

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Summary of Meeting from Stephen Hoffman dated August 21, 2006

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