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Figure 1 – Commissioner Merrifield makes a point, as Janice Dunn Lee and Luis Reyes listen during the opening plenary session of the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

On April 11-16, 2005, Commissioner Merrifield led a delegation from the United States, including staff from the NRC and the Department of State, to participate in the 3rd National Report Review Meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), in Vienna, Austria. The CNS is a treaty ratified by 56 countries (Contracting Parties) to ensure the safe use of nuclear energy around the world. Each country is required to submit a report for peer review by the other Contracting Parties every three years to demonstrate that it complies with the Articles of the Convention. Then, each country is required to provide a presentation of its report during the National Report review meeting and answer any questions that the other Contracting Parties may have, after hearing the presentation.

The two-hour presentation of the U.S. report was presented by Commissioner Merrifield and Luis Reyes, the Executive Director for Operations. At the conclusion of the presentation, the two presenters answered questions for an additional two hours. The session concluded with the drafting of the report on the U.S. presentation by the group secretary (called the Rapporteur) to highlight good practices, challenges, and measures to improve safety, which is later read to the entire collection of Contracting Parties and approved at a plenary session during the second week of the review meeting.

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Figure 2 – The NRC Team at the Convention on Nuclear Safety in Vienna, Austria.

Front Row from left to right: Merrilee Banic, Renee Li, Janice Dunn Lee, Luis Reyes, Commissioner Merrifield, Bill Borchardt, T.J. Kim. Back Row from left to right: Jim Linville, Darrell Roberts, Dave Skeen, John Tappert, Tom Hiltz, Theresa Valentine.

Bill Borchardt, the Deputy Director of NRR, served as the Chairman for one of the six country groups that met throughout the first week of the review meeting. John Tappert, Chief of the Resource Management Branch in NRR, also served as a Rapporteur for another country group. Janice Dunn Lee, Director of OIP, provided support for Commissioner Merrifield's bilateral meetings. NRC Team members covering the various country group sessions included Merrilee Banic, Tom Hiltz, T.J. Kim, Renee Li, Darrell Roberts, Dave Skeen, and Theresa Valentine. NRC employee, Jim Linville from OIP, who is currently serving as the Nuclear Safety Attache at the permanent U.S. Mission in Vienna, was also instrumental in providing logistical support to the US delegation. Two staffers from the Department of State also provided support to the team.