

CHARTER FOR AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S REACTOR OVERSIGHT PROGRAM

In the Staff Requirements Memorandum for SECY-2012-0081, "Risk-Informed Regulatory Framework for New Reactors," the Commission directed the staff to pursue an independent review of the Reactor Oversight Program to provide a reinforced foundation upon which the agency can plan for the operational review of new nuclear power plants based on Generation III+ reactor technology. The independent review will be conducted by U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff, independent of the present stewards of the Reactor Oversight Process (ROP) in the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) and the NRC staff members that initially developed the program.

Objective

Conduct an independent assessment of the ROP's objectives and implementation, including the relative roles of headquarters and regional staff, interactions with industry over performance indicator assessments, and the effectiveness of NRC's assessment of substantive cross-cutting issues.

Scope

The independent review will include the following activities:

- a. Reviews of existing documentation assessing the effectiveness of the ROP in achieving its stated objectives. Examples of available products include:
 - Self-assessments by NRR
 - Inspector General audits
 - External stakeholder feedback and reviews
- b. Interviews with current ROP practitioners and stakeholders. Representative interviews would include individuals such as:
 - NRC headquarters and regional staff
 - NRC headquarters and regional management
 - Non-Governmental Organization representatives
 - Industry representatives (licensee management and Nuclear Energy Institute)
- c. Observations of a sample of ROP-related process interactions between NRC staff and industry.
- d. Assessment of common issues and programmatic themes.
- e. Development of recommendations, as appropriate, for enhancements or areas for further review.

Coordination and Communications

The independent team review will:

- a. Solicit input from the ROP program office stewards, the implementers, and stakeholders
- b. Remain independent of the existing ROP Enhancement¹ initiative
- c. Keep the program office informed of the team's efforts
- d. Develop a communications plan

Expected Product and Schedule

The independent team review will provide its observations, conclusions, and recommendations in the form of a written report to the Deputy Executive Director for Reactor and Preparedness Programs in June 2013.

Staffing

The independent review team will consist of the following members:

Leader Brian McDermott, Office of Federal and State Materials and Environmental Management Programs

Managers Eric Benner, Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards
 David Pelton, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Staff TBD

Additional team members will be added as needed to support the project's objective and elements of the review. The estimated resources for this project include part time support from an Senior Executive Service team leader, two Branch Chiefs, and four staff, over a period of five months. Staff will be added to the project following approval of the Charter and development of the data collection framework.

¹ In November 2012, NRR began a broad initiative to enhance the ROP baseline inspection program. Portions of the NRR initiative have been placed on hold pending completion of the ROP Independent Assessment, to avoid any duplication of effort.