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***** FOR THE RECORD *****

NRC's Involvement With Industry Association Meetings

Two members of the public contacted the NRC last week about a uranium recovery workshop organized by the National Mining Association (NMA) and being held in Denver this week. They questioned the NRC's participation in this meeting, given the NRC's status as an independent regulator. Subsequent media coverage did not completely clarify our role.

Despite including a disclaimer that this was not an NRC meeting, the NMA had listed the NRC as a "co-sponsor" of the meeting on several pages of their website. Monday, NRC staff contacted the NMA and asked for all references to the NRC as a co-sponsor to be removed. The NMA complied and issued a statement saying they had erred in referring to the NRC that way.

To share information on regulatory issues related to uranium recovery, the NRC has long participated in this annual workshop. It is a gathering of NRC licensees, companies interested in uranium recovery, staff from other federal, state and tribal agencies, staff from NMA, other stakeholders, and the NRC. NMA's website says this year's meeting "will feature current issues affecting the uranium recovery industry and will focus on enhancing and promoting a better understanding of regulatory trends and the uranium recovery licensing program." This objective is consistent with the NRC's mission.

Regardless of whether the NRC is labeled a co-sponsor, the agency's role has always been sharing information on topics of interest in uranium recovery regulation and providing NRC speakers who can address those topics. This year NRC staff will make presentations on the status of NRC's uranium recovery program, inspection findings and trends, and a draft generic communication the NRC is preparing. NRC staff will also sit on panels about groundwater restoration, the National Historic Preservation Act consultation process, and safety and environmental review evaluations in uranium recovery.

Participation in industry meetings of this sort in no way compromises the NRC's position as an independent regulator. Many industry associations organize similar types of meetings and ask the agency to provide speakers. When asked, the NRC provides information to licensees, potential licensees, industry groups, the public, the media, opposition groups, and others.

The NRC had no part in inviting speakers who will discuss the politics of uranium mining in Virginia. Two members of the public have suggested the NRC's participation in the meeting was inappropriate because these speakers are on the agenda.

Regarding interactions with licensees, the NRC responds to requests for information from any potential applicant—including potential license applicants from Virginia, regardless of the current ban on uranium mining in the state. The NRC has repeatedly stressed that its role is not to weigh in on policy, but to remain an independent regulator focused on health, safety and the environment. When asked about the NRC's regulatory requirements in Denver this week, NRC staff will respond appropriately.

The NRC staff presentations at the NMA workshop are available on the NRC public website at <http://www.nrc.gov/materials/uranium-recovery/public.html#workshops>.