

December 18, 2013

Mary Olson  
Nuclear Information  
and Resource Service, Southeast  
PO Box 7586  
Asheville, NC 28802

Dear Ms. Olson:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter dated October 7, 2013, in which you expressed concern about the cancellation of the NRC's Waste Confidence public comment meetings due to the recent lapse in government appropriations. As you may be aware, the NRC rescheduled all postponed meetings, added a teleconference-only meeting on December 9, and extended the public comment period until December 20, 2013. Further, public meetings that were not affected by the lapse in appropriations took place as originally planned.

In your letter, you requested a number of items concerning the postponed public meetings and the impact of the cancelled meetings on the public comment period. The NRC staff considered and addressed your concerns in the following manner. Public notice that several of the comment meetings were being postponed due to the lapse in appropriations was given as soon as those decisions were made. The agency took the decision to cancel very seriously, and tried to give as much advance notice of the cancellation as possible, in light of the uncertainties with the lapse of appropriations and NRC's operating status. The cancellation notices were promptly e-mailed to all registered attendees for the meetings, e-mailed to all WCO Outreach participants, posted on the Waste Confidence external Web site, and issued in press releases. We have found the use of the NRC Web site, press releases, and e-mail notifications to be highly effective in providing useful, up-to-date information to stakeholders.

In terms of the five rescheduled meetings, the new dates were provided to the previously registered attendees, e-mailed to all WCO Outreach participants, and posted on the external Web site with at least three weeks advance notice. While this notice was slightly less than the 30 days you requested, we believe staff gave timely notice under the circumstances. In addition, staff added a new meeting (teleconference-only) on December 9 to increase public participation before the end of the comment period on December 20, 2013. We believe that extending the comment period to December 20th provides additional opportunity for public comment.

The NRC established teleconference lines for the three NRC Headquarters-based meetings on October 1, November 14, and December 9. Staff has found that teleconferences at public meetings outside of NRC Headquarters often result in poor listening and commenting experiences for meeting attendees and participants due to reduced telecommunication capabilities or support. Lastly, the NRC staff will not be able to support your request that the NRC allow individuals to present comments by video. The NRC currently lacks the capability

and resources to securely accept and reliably transfer video-recorded comments into written documents, which form the official record for a rulemaking.

Finally, anyone who has comments on the Waste Confidence Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Rule may submit written comments by December 20, 2013, through many avenues. Comments may be submitted online at <http://www.regulations.gov>, by searching for Docket ID NRC-2012-0246, or by e-mail to [Rulemaking.Comments@nrc.gov](mailto:Rulemaking.Comments@nrc.gov), citing Docket ID NRC-2012-0246. Additionally, comments may be submitted by mail to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, ATTN: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff. Comments may also be hand-delivered to the NRC at 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, 20852, between 7:15 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. eastern time. Finally, comments may be faxed to the NRC at 301-415-1101, ATTN: Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. All written comments should include the Docket ID NRC-2012-0246.

Thank you for your letter and for sharing your concerns and requests.

Sincerely,

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Allison M. Macfarlane