

May 6, 2015

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Burns

FROM: Mark A. Satorius */RA/*
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: ENHANCING NRC PUBLIC MEETINGS TASK GROUP REPORT
ACTION PLAN AND MESSAGING TO THE PUBLIC

The purpose of this memo is to respond to 1.) a March 5, 2014, memo from Chairman Macfarlane (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML14070A070) titled "Enhancing NRC Public Meetings" (AMM140305-3-OEDO), and 2.) a subsequent tasking related to the July 16, 2014, SRM-M140603.

In the March 5, 2014, memo, Chairman Macfarlane requested the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff take certain actions concerning the staff's conduct of public meetings. The Chairman specifically requested "staff's analysis of successful models of public engagement and your recommendations for strengthening effective meetings, including course offerings that support the best practices for staff assessment, development, and presentations."

Subsequently, in SRM-M140603, the staff was tasked to: "Address the recommendation regarding the effectiveness of NRC messaging to the public in conjunction with their ongoing response to the Chairman's tasking memorandum on 'Enhancing NRC Public Meetings,' dated March 5, 2014. In this response, the staff should consider the use of outside consultants in enhancing NRC messaging to the public." The recommendation being referenced in this task is Recommendation 4 from the 2014 Reactor Oversight Process (ROP) Independent Assessment Report, which states: "Consider enhancements to improve the effectiveness of NRC messages through more extensive use of plain language, a focus on the desired effect of the communication on stakeholder perceptions, and the use of wording that conveys the significance of issues to the broadest possible audience."

Enhancing NRC Public Meetings Task Group (AMM140305-3-OEDO)

I responded to the Chairman on May 30, 2014 (ADAMS Accession No. ML14149A323), and July 30, 2014 (ADAMS Accession No. ML14070A170). In the May memorandum, I reinforced the NRC's commitment to transparency and openness, increasing public confidence, and retaining its position as a trusted regulator. Further, in this memorandum, I committed to assemble a task group "...to complete a comprehensive look at our public meeting policies, processes, and guidance, including their implementation, and work toward making what we view as necessary improvements to those aspects of our work."

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The July memorandum provides a brief update on the group's activities, including that the task group on Enhancing NRC Public Meetings was formed in June 2014. As part of its work, the task group reviewed numerous past and current documents and guidance in its evaluations, including: a report of the Public Communications Task Force, led by then-Commissioner Jeffrey S. Merrifield, dated August 7, 2003, (ADAMS Accession No. ML032730836); a *Public Communication and Engagement* report by Jacob I. Zimmerman, March 2013; and a Vantage Human Resource Services, Inc. Report dated May 2, 2014, *Enhancing NRC Public Meetings* (enclosure).

The task group produced a report, including a set of five recommendations, which was provided to me in January 2015 (ADAMS Accession No. ML15029A456). The task group's report was subsequently provided to the Commission through a March 12, 2015, Commissioners' Assistant Note (ADAMS Accession No. ML15070A125).

The task group's five recommendations were:

- Recommendation 1: Create a *Center of Excellence* for Public Engagement to serve as a centralized resource for information, advice, and support for staff responsible for the planning, execution, and evaluation of NRC public meetings.
- Recommendation 2: Create a public meeting qualification program for NRC staff that plan, conduct, and participate in public meetings to ensure acceptable meeting planning, outreach, public speaking, presentation, and facilitation skills.
- Recommendation 3: Building upon existing documents, develop and implement a comprehensive set of enhanced agencywide guidance on conducting public meetings.
- Recommendation 4: Develop or update guidance and other resources to help stakeholders, including members of the public and licensees, effectively participate in public meetings.
- Recommendation 5: Design and establish more effective ways to measure the success of NRC public meetings.

Assistant for Operations Melanie Galloway provided the task group's report to all NRC office directors and regional administrators with a request to provide feedback on the task group's findings and recommendations. The Office of the Executive Director for Operations (OEDO) staff took that feedback into account and created a plan to take action on the report. Please note that this plan is based upon current budget and resources and is not dependent upon the expenditure of additional resources.

Feedback on the report and further analysis by OEDO showed the greatest support and return on investment from implementation of Recommendation 3. As such, the agency will begin efforts to improve public meetings with developing and implementing a comprehensive set of enhanced agencywide guidance on conducting public meetings. Per the language in the task group report, products will build upon existing guidance. As part of this initiative, the policy statement on public meetings, as well as Management Directive (MD) 3.5, "Attendance at NRC-Sponsored Public Meetings," will be revised and updated. The policy statement will be revised to incorporate current public meeting philosophy, as well as to state clearly the importance and reasons why we conduct public meetings, communicate with the public, and involve and engage the public and other stakeholders in nuclear regulation. The MD will be updated to incorporate

current public meeting practices, including using the agency's Public Meeting Notice and Public Meeting Feedback systems. Additional guidance will be presented at the appropriate level (i.e., OEDO Procedure, webpage, checklist).

Guidance will be created by OEDO staff and short-term task groups using a collaborative process to ensure products incorporate best practices and lessons learned from across the agency. To begin, OEDO will document the full scope of guidance used across the agency involving public meetings, as well as seek additional input from NRC staff and management as to the full scope of guidance needed and which topics should be prioritized. The products discussed in task group Recommendation 4 will be considered as part of this initiative to the extent that they can help the public understand the NRC's public meeting process and provide useful and relevant information. This work will be prioritized as part of routine guidance updating. Guidance will be provided through a one-stop intranet page as described in Recommendation 1.

In terms of task group Recommendation 5, in-house expertise will be sought to assist with measuring the success of our public meetings. Outside assistance will also be sought if warranted. Defining what a "successful" NRC public meeting is will be included in an appropriate product as part of the guidance initiative.

OEDO staff analyzed Recommendation 2 and the "formal Center of Excellence" portion of Recommendation 1 and concluded that it is best to reconsider the need for these actions at a later date once sufficient time has passed for the improvements discussed above to have had some impact.

I would like to emphasize the high-quality work performed by the task group. These representatives from across the agency provided their extensive expertise in public meetings as a corollary assignment and in doing so contributed to the agency's ability to improve its interactions with all stakeholders as part of our meetings. I am indebted to them for their commitment and am confident that the above actions resulting from the task group's recommendations will greatly enhance our agency's public meetings.

Effectiveness of NRC Messaging to the Public (SRM-M140603)

Since this tasking and recommendation, the staff has taken numerous actions to enhance ROP communications. Staff has established a dedicated ROP communications lead who is responsible for all ROP communications initiatives and plain language. Staff has revised or is currently revising ROP documents which communicate technical information to the public in plain language. Staff authored and is finalizing a new NUREG document designed for knowledge management and public communication to provide plain language explanations of ROP processes in a question and answer format. Staff is redesigning and revising the ROP public website. These actions, being taken to address ROP Independent Assessment Recommendation 4, will result in improved effectiveness of NRC messaging to the public.

Also since this tasking, the staff has established a contract to provide agency access to outside consultants to assist NRC staff in identifying and conducting external outreach and communications to key individuals or organizations on different topics for various purposes. Support may include assistance such as identifying key messages, designing and

developing communication methods and tools, and assessment of the effectiveness of NRC's efforts to communicate key messages. The staff will use this outside consultant to review and improve these ROP communication products (e.g., website, NUREG) in accordance with the SRM tasking.

In addition to this ROP-specific work, the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer is now offering two courses focused on providing NRC staff with the skills needed to deliver effective messaging to the public. The "Basic Presentation" course is a three-day course designed for personnel with little-to-no skills in public speaking and presentation skills. The purpose is to build a foundation of basic communication skills. The "Advanced Presentation" course is a two-day course designed to further sharpen participants' skills. This course can and will be used as a refresher course.

Although we should never stop our efforts to improve interactions with our stakeholders, I consider the staff's actions detailed above to be significant progress towards improving the effectiveness of our public messaging. I look forward to seeing the results of these efforts.

This memo closes SRM-AMM140305, task 3 and SRM-M140603, task 2.

Enclosure:
Vantage Report on Public Meetings

cc: Commissioner Svinicki
Commissioner Ostendorff
Commissioner Baran
SECY

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