

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

**Title:**           **BRIEFING ON NRC'S INITIATIVES ON**  
**RESPONSIVENESS TO THE PUBLIC**  
**PUBLIC MEETING**

**Location:**       **Rockville, Maryland**

**Date:**           **Thursday, February 2, 1995**

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1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
2 NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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4 BRIEFING ON NRC'S INITIATIVES ON  
5 RESPONSIVENESS TO THE PUBLIC

6 \*\*\*

7 PUBLIC MEETING

8  
9 U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
10 One White Flint North  
11 Rockville, Maryland  
12

13 Thursday, February 2, 1995  
14

15 The Commission met in open session, pursuant to  
16 notice, at 2:00 p.m., Ivan Selin, Chairman, presiding.  
17

18 COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

19 IVAN SELIN, Chairman of the Commission  
20 KENNETH C. ROGERS, Commissioner  
21 E. GAIL de PLANQUE, Commissioner  
22  
23  
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1 STAFF SEATED AT THE COMMISSION TABLE:

2 JOHN C. HOYLE, Acting Secretary

3 BILL OLMSTED, Office of the General Counsel

4 JAMES TAYLOR, Executive Director for Operations

5 JAMES BLAHA, Assistant for Operations, OEDO

6 PATRICIA NORRY, Director, Office of Administration

7 GERALD CRANFORD, Director, Office of Information

8 Resources Management

9 ANDREW BATES, Chief, Operations Branch, SECY

10 EILEEN MASON, Chief, Organizational Development

11 and Training Branch, OP

12 ROY ZIMMERMAN, Associate Director for Projects,

13 NRR

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

[2:00 p.m.]

CHAIRMAN SELIN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

This is a briefing for which I can truly say I've been waiting with great expectation. We'll be meeting this morning to be briefed by our staff on the draft report issued in December 1994 on responsiveness to the public. This report reflects the staff's intensive efforts over the last six months to evaluate critically and systematically those agency practices and procedures that have an impact on the people with whom we do business and also to develop plans for improving our responsiveness to the public.

Some people in my office have worked on parts of this project. We have all kinds of information about what a huge effort this has been, how much work and inventiveness and attempt at openmindedness have gone into doing this and it's something for which we're quite grateful.

Of course, the immediate impetus for this improvement plan is, in fact, the Administration's National Performance Review and the attempt of that review to redefine the government's mission and organization and to reinvent government programs in terms of what, coming from the private sector, I would call better private sector practices, that is streamlining, putting the customer first,

1 cutting red tape, promoting greater efficiency.

2 The performance review has the potential to  
3 promote comprehensive changes in the way the federal  
4 government does business and to bring government closer to  
5 the people than it has been at any time this century.

6 In carrying out the objectives of the NPR, the NRC  
7 has defined the term "customer" very broadly, to include the  
8 general public, public interest groups, industry, state,  
9 local government and the Congress. As I think you can  
10 readily see from leaving through the pages of the staff's  
11 report which proposes significant and meaningful steps  
12 towards improving our responsiveness to these customers,  
13 we've taken this very seriously.

14 Nevertheless, I should say the staff's report is  
15 not simply a response to the NPR. It represents the  
16 culmination of 20 years of experience in bringing a complex  
17 and closely guarded technology out of the shadows and into  
18 the public arena. The Commission was created in 1975 to  
19 accomplish just that and we've invested considerable time  
20 and energy in instilling in our employees the concept of  
21 safety as the agency's and every individual employee's first  
22 and foremost responsibility and in fostering greater  
23 openness of our activities to public observation.

24 Building on that earlier effort, we've moved  
25 beyond broad general concepts and public observation as an

1 end in itself to more specific concrete steps to interact  
2 with and to incorporate the public more directly in the  
3 conduct of our affairs. Although the report in its current  
4 form confines itself to the technical staff offices,  
5 excluding such Commission level programs as the Office of  
6 the Secretary, Public Affairs, Congressional Affairs and the  
7 Atomic Safety and Licensing Board which some members of the  
8 public do interact everyday, the staff has produced what I  
9 consider to be a dynamite report and I'd like to  
10 congratulate the EDO, all the staff and all NRC employees  
11 who have participated in the various working groups for this  
12 prodigious effort.

13 Commissioner Rogers?

14 COMMISSIONER ROGERS: No, nothing.

15 CHAIRMAN SELIN: Commissioner de Planque?

16 Mr. Taylor?

17 MR. TAYLOR: Good afternoon. With me at the table  
18 are Jim Blaha who helped me coordinate this review, Pat  
19 Norry, Gerald Cranford, Eileen Mason, Andy Bates from  
20 Secretary and Roy Zimmerman.

21 As you know, Mr. Chairman, the agency has always  
22 attempted to conduct its business in an open and public  
23 manner. However, in recent years we've taken additional  
24 steps to be more responsive to those with whom we do  
25 business. Example of recent initiatives to be more

1 responsive include increased use of public workshops for  
2 rulemaking, participatory rulemaking, cost beneficial  
3 licensing action program and, for example, quarterly press  
4 conferences by regional administrators. That's just a few  
5 examples. While we've made these types of improvements in  
6 selected areas, responsiveness to the public did not receive  
7 priority attention in all NRC programs nor had there been  
8 really a systematic review of our business activities to  
9 identify areas where we could improve public responsiveness.

10 Therefore, in July of this past year, I asked all  
11 the NRC offices to develop plans to improve our performance  
12 in this area. I'm encouraged by what the staff has done to  
13 this point and we're here today to brief the Commission on  
14 selected aspects of the staff initiatives. We won't go  
15 through everything in the paper because it is a rather  
16 lengthy paper, but what I would call key initiatives.

17 Jim will continue.

18 MR. BLAHA: Next chart, please.

19 [Slide.]

20 MR. BLAHA: As the EDO indicated, the public  
21 responsiveness initiative had as one of its objectives a  
22 more systematic and comprehensive look at how we could  
23 improve responsiveness to the public. Sometimes that  
24 manifests itself in improved timeliness, but it can also be  
25 qualitative, such as being more courteous or understanding



1 the impact of our actions on our licensees and other  
2 interested parties. Of equal importance however, another  
3 objective, was to better train and sensitize NRC employees  
4 that public responsiveness was a fundamental aspect of their  
5 job. This afternoon we will discuss a number of ways we  
6 hope to achieve these objectives.

7 One of the first tasks was to get a common  
8 understanding of who the public is. In sort, we agreed that  
9 the public was anyone with whom we did business. For an  
10 inspector, it is the licensee or local citizens or local  
11 organizations. For the FOIA Branch it could be the media or  
12 public interest groups or law firms. For the Division of  
13 Contracts, it's contractors who do work for NRC. For State  
14 Programs, it's the state governments and so on. Each NRC  
15 organization needs to understand who their public is and how  
16 to be more responsive.

17 Next chart, please.

18 [Slide.]

19 MR. BLAHA: Our approach was to establish a focal  
20 point in each office to coordinate the review. We met, we  
21 exchanged ideas, we discussed anecdotal examples and  
22 conventional wisdom about good and bad public  
23 responsiveness. The EDO solicited ideas on participation  
24 from all employees through an all employee announcement and  
25 we also had a union liaison who participated in the review.

1 In some cases we used focus groups and interviews to get  
2 feedback from the staff. We attempted to improve existing  
3 practices but also to look at new and more effective ways of  
4 improving responsiveness.

5 Next chart, please.

6 [Slide.]

7 MR. BLAHA: As ideas for improvement surfaced, it  
8 became evident that some were office or program specific,  
9 but others were more generic, cutting across office lines.  
10 This latter group we call infrastructure changes because  
11 they seem to deal with fundamental aspects of how we do  
12 business. One of the first questions we asked was how does  
13 the agency communicate to its employees that responsiveness  
14 to the public is important? The idea of an administrative  
15 policy to set this tone seemed appropriate, similar to the  
16 policy sections we have in our management directives or in  
17 our sexual harassment prevention policy. That is why our  
18 report begins with proposed policy on responsiveness to the  
19 public.

20 Our second infrastructure change deals with how we  
21 make documents available to the public in our public  
22 document rooms. The concept is that we should automatically  
23 make documents available in our public document rooms if we  
24 believe there will be significant public interest. Ms.  
25 Norry will speak to this area in more detail.

1           Other infrastructure changes involve staff  
2 training and orientation and also the use of electronic  
3 media in our business activities. The Office of Personnel  
4 and Information Resource Management will speak to these  
5 areas.

6           Next chart, please.

7           [Slide.]

8           MR. BLAHA: After receiving and incorporating  
9 Commission comments, we propose publishing the report for  
10 public comment. We view this as an ongoing process and hope  
11 to continue these and other initiatives as opportunities  
12 present themselves in the future to improve public  
13 responsiveness.

14          Next chart.

15          [Slide.]

16          CHAIRMAN SELIN: I was afraid you were going to  
17 end the briefing with that chart.

18          MR. BLAHA: While we have a sample of the offices  
19 represented at the table today, all the offices did  
20 participate in identified areas for improvement. Most of  
21 the participating offices have representatives present in  
22 the audience today and we have the regions connected by  
23 phone if there are any questions for any of them.

24          In the administrative areas, OP, ADMIN and IRM  
25 will discuss their planned improvements. Andy Bates from

1 the Office of the Secretary led a review of our  
2 correspondence timeliness and he will speak about that. NRR  
3 will talk about some of the mission-related initiatives in  
4 their area.

5 If there are no questions about how we conducted  
6 the review, we can start with Ms. Norry.

7 MS. NORRY: Good afternoon. I'd like to discuss  
8 some of the public responsiveness improvements we're going  
9 to make in four areas: our Freedom of Information Act  
10 responsibilities; our contracting process; the security  
11 program; and the placement of documents in the public  
12 document room through the FOIA process.

13 First of all, the Freedom of Information Act  
14 Program results in somewhere between 600 and 700 Freedom of  
15 Information Act requests coming in per year. These come  
16 from a variety of sources. Some of them are frequent  
17 requesters, some of them are people who have received  
18 documents before and believe there must be more documents  
19 out there and so will continually ask for the same type of  
20 documents. But what we do in all cases and have done for a  
21 number of years is maintain frequent telephone interaction  
22 with the requester both to clarify the nature of their  
23 request where that is necessary and also to let them know  
24 that we're working on it and that certain portions of it may  
25 take longer than others.

1           One of the things that we'd like to do to improve  
2   our process is to conduct a user conference of those who use  
3   our FOIA process. We have scheduled such a conference for  
4   this next month, March 23rd, and will be announcing it in  
5   the Federal Register as well as sending direct invitations  
6   to the principal FOIA users. These are law firms, public  
7   interest groups, the media, certain commercial firms who  
8   have made use of the FOIA process. We, of course, will have  
9   all the appropriate NRC staff from the various offices there  
10   to answer questions. A representative, in fact the co-  
11   director of the Office of Information and Privacy from the  
12   Department of Justice which oversees the government-wide  
13   FOIA program, and we hope to use this conference to get  
14   suggestions, comments about how the process works in NRC and  
15   how it is viewed, other than just in the context of a  
16   specific reply, but a more general discussion.

17           COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: I have just a couple  
18   questions. You said some of the requesters are frequent  
19   requesters and others are one-time. Can you give us a sense  
20   of what percentage of the requests would come from people  
21   who use the system frequently? Just ballpark.

22           MR. POWELL: Probably about ten to 20 percent.

23           COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: Okay. All right.  
24   That's interesting.

25           The other thing I think I saw in here somewhere is

1 that a lot of the people using the FOIA system frequently  
2 don't even know about the PDR. Is there any information  
3 that's routinely given to these requesters or is available  
4 for these requesters about the PDR?

5 MS. NORRY: Yes. When we reply, this results in  
6 the eventual placement of the documents in the PDR, as well  
7 as sending it to the requester. In the case of where the  
8 requester has to be charged for it, sometimes they prefer  
9 just to go to the PDR and look at it. But this results in  
10 them being told about the PDR as well as, in some cases,  
11 local public document rooms throughout the country where  
12 information can be viewed.

13 COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: So, is there some  
14 standard one-pager that goes out to the FOIA requesters and  
15 says, "For your information?"

16 MS. NORRY: There is such a thing as a PDR?

17 COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: Yes.

18 MS. NORRY: I'm not sure that we do that.

19 MR. POWELL: Russ Powell, Chief of FOIA Branch.  
20 We send most of the documents to the PDR for the --

21 COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: Would you use the  
22 microphone, please?

23 MR. POWELL: Most of the time, many of our  
24 responses result in us sending the documents to the PDR for  
25 the requester to obtain them from the contractor there

1 because the cost of reproduction is cheaper if they get it  
2 there. It's nine cents per page and if they order it from  
3 us we charge 20 cents. So, we send a standard sheet telling  
4 them that. We also have a number of flyers, I can't  
5 remember the name of it exactly, but that explain also how  
6 you can request documents from the PDR.

7 COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: Okay. Thanks.

8 MS. NORRY: Next slide, please.

9 [Slide.]

10 MS. NORRY: The next thing we plan to do to  
11 improve the FOIA Program is to conduct -- and this would be  
12 sometime after this meeting, to conduct a survey of those  
13 out there who have used the process. Of course, for such a  
14 survey, we'll have to get OMB clearance. We can ask for  
15 clearance under their expedited process and go out for about  
16 a three month period and ask some perhaps more detailed  
17 questions about the process and triggered by some of the  
18 reactions we get at the public meeting and see if there are  
19 other areas where we can improve. Some of these views may  
20 result in different approaches such as making sure we send  
21 out information about the PDR or other suggestions. We're  
22 open to all sorts of suggestions on how we could improve the  
23 process. Then, if it looks like we need to go out and do  
24 another survey in the following year, we'll do that if it  
25 seems appropriate.

1 Next, please.

2 CHAIRMAN SELIN: I'd like to just expand on what  
3 Mr. Blaha had said earlier. I think the objective -- and  
4 this follows up on Commissioner de Planque's comments. The  
5 objective should be that documents which are likely to be of  
6 some reasonable interest and would be obtainable under FOIA  
7 anyway should just be put in the PDR so that people don't  
8 have to make a FOIA request to get things. I stop short of  
9 just saying everything that's FOIA should be put in the PDR  
10 because there'd be a huge mass of paper that would be of no  
11 interest to anybody. But as long as -- we should make it as  
12 easy as possible for people to get documents and as long as  
13 there's a reasonable prospect that they'd be of some  
14 interest, we should just put them out there and not wait for  
15 a request to come in.

16 The other half of it is to make sure the world of  
17 folks who might otherwise make FOIA requests know that there  
18 is a public document room and that they can just go and  
19 browse.

20 MS. NORRY: I'm going to address that partially in  
21 a slide a little bit later on.

22 CHAIRMAN SELIN: Fine.

23 [Slide.]

24 MS. NORRY: The next segment of the public to whom  
25 we are addressing our efforts is those who wish to do



1 business with the NRC, those through contracts. We are in  
2 the process of making improvements in the contracting area  
3 through our procurement reinvention laboratory by which we  
4 obtained permission, as it were, from some of the central  
5 agencies who control these things to do some shortcuts to  
6 the procurement process, such as how long the Commerce  
7 Business Daily announcements have to appear and so forth.  
8 In some cases we've been able to eliminate that notice for  
9 certain specialized research and technical assistance  
10 projects for which there is a limited population of those  
11 who can do that work. We also have been able to eliminate a  
12 pre-award audit which takes 30 days. So, we're whittling  
13 away at the number of total days that the process takes.

14 In addition, we are establishing certain  
15 timeliness standards for our interaction with these people  
16 once they have expressed an interest, whether it's an  
17 interest in getting on the bidder's mailing list, whether  
18 it's an interest in responding to a notice in the Commerce  
19 Business Daily. We are establishing some pretty strict time  
20 frames for when we must get back with them. Or for  
21 disappointed contractors who wish to have a debriefing on  
22 why they were eliminated or why they didn't get the  
23 contract, we're going to try to do all of these things in a  
24 much more timely fashion.

25 So, in addition to making it a faster process,

1 we're also going to try to make it a more user friendly  
2 process. Of course, one of the areas in addition that is  
3 speeding things up and I think will be much more important  
4 in the future as we increase the number of users is our bank  
5 card program through which purchases can be made up to  
6 certain limits by people throughout the agency and through  
7 the Authorized Users Program.

8 So, all of these are aimed at making the  
9 procurement process more timely.

10 [Slide.]

11 MS. NORRY: The next slide relates to our security  
12 program and here the focus is on visitors to the NRC. The  
13 people who see these visitors first are our security guards.  
14 We need to improve the way that happens, both in how people  
15 are greeted, how they are handled, how they are processed  
16 through our system and sometimes that can seem burdensome,  
17 particularly when a large group arrives at once. Sometimes  
18 records are less than clear as to who is expected. So,  
19 we're going to improve that through some automated systems  
20 which will enable us to have right there who's expected and  
21 why and then we're going to be looking through a feasibility  
22 study at a video based process which will kind of take your  
23 picture, get you in all in one step.

24 In addition, we are going to -- we've just taken  
25 over from the General Services Administration the contract

1 with the guards. We wanted to do this because we wanted to  
2 gain much better control over that contract. One of the  
3 things we'll be able to do now is to set some higher  
4 training levels, set some higher qualification levels and in  
5 general, we hope, improve the guard force in its  
6 responsiveness, its courtesy. We'd be sending them to some  
7 training, which Personnel will provide, on customer service,  
8 how you relate to people, and then we'll take a survey and  
9 say to the visitors, "How do you think things went?"  
10 Hopefully we can make some improvements.

11 Next slide.

12 [Slide.]

13 MS. NORRIS: The question that you were addressing  
14 earlier, Mr. Chairman, on the policy on public access to  
15 documents and how we might do more of that without people  
16 having to request through the FOIA, first of all, as you  
17 know, in Management Directive 3.4 there is a list of all of  
18 the areas which are routinely released to the public  
19 document room. Accompanying that, of course, is a list of  
20 those which represent exemptions of the FOIA process. But  
21 there is a huge preponderance of releasable documents in  
22 what we do.

23 What we did was we took a survey of all of the  
24 requests which were done in 1993 to discover how many of  
25 those resulted in documents being placed in the PDR not

1 previously in the PDR. This wording here might be a little  
2 bit confusing, but that's what that means. These that you  
3 see listed here are the principal categories of those  
4 requests that resulted in our putting documents in the PDR,  
5 not previously having been there. There was no particular  
6 reason for them not previously having been there, it's just  
7 that in some cases -- for instance, in the case of some of  
8 these NMSS documents, there was a decision made some time  
9 ago that pre-1988 documents related to material licenses  
10 were not automatically placed in the PDR. So, some of it  
11 results from that. Others were requesting material on  
12 licensee codes and so forth.

13 So, when you see the list here, there were about  
14 27 others that were just single one-time requests which  
15 couldn't be put in any kind of a category.

16 Now, the reason we did this is so we could try to  
17 discover were there some categories that we could use in  
18 going back to the offices and saying, "Does this suggest  
19 itself as an area where we could routinely start putting  
20 these kinds of documents in the public document room?"  
21 We're going to be doing that with the offices as indicated  
22 in these categories and, in addition, the FOIA staff, just  
23 by virtue of handling these requests over the years, has  
24 accumulated quite a lot of information about what the public  
25 seems to want and we'll be sitting down with each of the

1 offices with this information and saying, "Are there other  
2 areas that you could suggest which we might routinely put in  
3 to ease the burden of people having to file FOIA requests?"

4 So, that's what we're going to be doing. In fact,  
5 that's what's covered on the next slide.

6 [Slide.]

7 MS. NORRY: We also will use any helpful feedback  
8 that we get in the meeting, in the public meeting we're  
9 having in March, as well as in the survey that might suggest  
10 other areas where we could place documents more routinely in  
11 the public document room.

12 COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: Pat, if I remember the  
13 numbers correctly, this represents about 10 percent or 20  
14 percent of the --

15 MS. NORRY: It's about, when you add those which  
16 were in miscellaneous categories, between 20 and 25 percent  
17 of all FOIA requests.

18 COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: And the remaining 75,  
19 that's totally a gunshot deal, no pattern?

20 MS. NORRY: Right. They were just onesies and  
21 twosies that were not -- in some cases those were documents  
22 which had partial redactions --

23 COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: Yes.

24 MS. NORRY: -- and were eventually placed in the  
25 PDR with the redactions.

1 COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: Okay.

2 MR. BLAHA: A large percentage were already in the  
3 PDR.

4 MS. NORRY: Oh, right.

5 COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: Okay.

6 MS. NORRY: This is just those -- that's why the  
7 chart may have been a little confusing. This is only those  
8 which resulted in documents being put in the PDR which  
9 previously had not been.

10 COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: Okay. Got it. Thanks.

11 MS. NORRY: That completes my --

12 MS. MASON: For the public responsiveness  
13 initiatives the Office of Personnel has been involved in are  
14 improving telephone communication, incorporating the concept  
15 of public responsiveness in existing forces, providing a new  
16 course, quality customer service, to NRC work groups, and  
17 improving responsiveness to applicants for employment.

18 Next slide, please.

19 [Slide.]

20 MS. MASON: To improve our telephone  
21 communication, we convened a group of secretaries because we  
22 thought they knew best what we were doing well and what we  
23 weren't doing well and asked them to come up with some  
24 recommendations. We put together some guidelines based on  
25 their recommendations and those are being circulated to the

1 staff and we're going to ask everybody to work with those  
2 guidelines and follow them.

3 We have a module on telephone techniques that we  
4 offer in a course called Orientation to NRC Office  
5 Procedures, for all new secretarial and clerical help and  
6 we're going to offer that as a stand-alone workshop for  
7 anybody who would like to improve their telephone skills.  
8 Then we have several videotapes in our Individualized  
9 Learning Center, which is on the third floor in the  
10 Professional Development Center in the second building and  
11 people can come and view those videotapes there or they can  
12 borrow them if they'd like.

13 The next slide, please.

14 [Slide.]

15 MS. MASON: We have public responsiveness in  
16 several of our existing courses. Orientation for New  
17 Employees sets the expectations. We talk about public  
18 trust, we talk about conflict of interest, we talk about  
19 ethics, standards of conduct and we show a video called the  
20 NRC Story. The Office of Public Affairs is revising that  
21 video with more of an emphasis on public responsiveness.

22 Then we have some courses that teach better  
23 communication. One of those courses, Clear Writing, we talk  
24 a lot about how you would respond to the public. One of the  
25 examples is a letter that the Chairman gets from an irate

1 homeowners' group that complains that there is smoke  
2 emanating and it must be from that plant in their  
3 neighborhood and what are you going to do about it? So, we  
4 talk a lot about what would be an appropriate response.

5 We also have a course called the Media Training  
6 Workshop where employees are videotaped. There will be  
7 somebody from the press with a microphone right in front of  
8 them and saying, "There's an incident. What's happening?  
9 Tell us about it." and we work through those videotapes and  
10 give a lot of criticisms to the people who are doing it and  
11 try to improve.

12 In our technical courses for inspectors, we have  
13 two courses, Effective Communications for NRC Inspectors,  
14 and Gathering Inspection Information Through Interviews. We  
15 emphasize professionalism. We talk about the principles of  
16 good regulation. Then again we have a lot of videotapes in  
17 the Individualized Learning Center about customer service,  
18 about telephone skills, about defusing conflict.

19 Next slide, please.

20 CHAIRMAN SELIN: Before you get off that.

21 MS. MASON: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN SELIN: When I read that section, which  
23 was very good, it appeared to me that it deals with the  
24 problem when you get somebody on the phone and that person  
25 doesn't handle you right, it doesn't deal with the problem



1 when you can't get anybody on the phone or you get telephone  
2 tag. It seems to me that the complaints that I've heard are  
3 we call somebody in the region who says it's in  
4 Headquarters. You get Headquarters who says, "Oh, that's  
5 this." You know, I'm not ready to go to the point of saying  
6 there ought to be case officers for every phone call, but it  
7 does seem to me that one of the problems is to make sure  
8 that people get answers, they don't just get pulled around.  
9 Or at least they're given a phone number that says, "If you  
10 haven't gotten what you want, please call this person and  
11 this person will follow up," to make sure that you can come  
12 in contact with somebody.

13 Was that addressed in there someplace and I missed  
14 it?

15 MS. MASON: No, they didn't, but they did talk  
16 about transferring people to make sure that you get a person  
17 at the end.

18 CHAIRMAN SELIN: That's not the point. I'm  
19 talking about --

20 MS. MASON: It's solving the problem.

21 CHAIRMAN SELIN: -- solving the problem. I mean  
22 successfully being transferred eight times is not  
23 necessarily a solution to the problem. You know, somebody  
24 to come back to. It's a default basically, somebody to come  
25 back to when the one quick shot to try to find the right

1 person didn't work.

2 MS. MASON: We could do that certainly in the  
3 telephone skills talk about that, make sure that the person  
4 is satisfied or ask them to call you back.

5 MR. BLAHA: I think after we get our public  
6 comments and even before, we're going to start implementing  
7 aspects of this.

8 CHAIRMAN SELIN: You don't need public comments to  
9 start.

10 MR. BLAHA: That's right. We are going to start  
11 from the implementing aspects. We need to lay out how we're  
12 going to evaluate whether this is working.

13 CHAIRMAN SELIN: Right.

14 MR. BLAHA: If the examples that you indicate,  
15 you've mentioned are happening, then it's not working. We  
16 need to make sure we know how to fix those things.

17 MS. MASON: Next slide, please.

18 [Slide.]

19 MS. MASON: We have a new course, Quality Customer  
20 Service. We've offered it to the Admin Service Center.  
21 We've offered it to all the employees in Information  
22 Resources Management. It's available to the guards if we  
23 want to do that, and it can be custom designed for any NRC  
24 work group. We are publicizing it in our catalogs and we'll  
25 tailor it for you if you want that course. Also, Quality

1 Customer Service, we have a lot of videotapes on that.

2 CHAIRMAN SELIN: I'd like to stress the point you  
3 made about the guards.

4 MS. MASON: Okay.

5 CHAIRMAN SELIN: People come in contact with  
6 different aspects of the NRC and to tell them, "Oh, those  
7 aren't employees, they're contractors," isn't very  
8 satisfactory. So, I commend you for stressing that whoever  
9 represents the NRC to the public has to act -- know that  
10 they're expected to act in a certain fashion. I've always  
11 found the guards very courteous, but the fact that the  
12 Chairman finds the guards very courteous may or may not be  
13 enormously informative. I'm not complaining about the  
14 service, I'm just saying that it's a good thing that you've  
15 pointed out whoever represents us to the public has to  
16 represent us in the fashion that we wish to be represented,  
17 whether it's an employee or a contractor.

18 MS. MASON: I think Pat is working on that with  
19 the guards and we'll certainly provide whatever we can for  
20 them.

21 COMMISSIONER ROGERS: There's just a little point  
22 that I don't know if this is the right place to bring it up.  
23 But in dealing with the public, I know you're talking about  
24 dealing with the angry citizens and angry public, it seems  
25 to me that it's very important to offer some support to the

1 NRC people. We, from time to time, really find very  
2 outrageous personal attacks on NRC employees. They come in  
3 the form of letters sometimes, but they may come in the form  
4 of telephone calls as well. We expect our people to deal  
5 with those things and respond to them in a very professional  
6 and unemotional way.

7 We know that takes a big toll. That takes a very  
8 big toll. I think that some thought ought to be given a  
9 little bit to trying to find ways to kind of reinforce  
10 people's ability to take that guff when it comes. Just  
11 simply because you're a public servant doesn't mean you're a  
12 doormat.

13 I think that we have to be very careful in how we  
14 respond externally, but what that does to people's insides  
15 can be pretty corrosive. I think a little thought perhaps  
16 should be given to somehow or other helping people to  
17 maintain the strength to deal with some of those really very  
18 difficult attacks on them personally. We all have our  
19 faults, but we all have our limits as well, and I think that  
20 somehow it's important to think about providing internal  
21 support to NRC people who are subject to this kind of thing  
22 from time to time.

23 MS. MASON: The last slide, please, or the next  
24 slide.

25 [Slide.]

1 MS. MASON: We also have, for the Office of  
2 Personnel, our external customers are applicants for  
3 employment. We're working real hard to be responsive to  
4 those people. Our goal is to acknowledge all applications  
5 for employment within seven to ten working days, to try to  
6 provide as much information as we can when people call with  
7 questions about their application and then finally when an  
8 employment decision is made to get back to applicants within  
9 ten working days. So, those are the things we're working  
10 on.

11 Yes?

12 COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: I think there's one more  
13 point in that cycle and that is the mid-term. Some of these  
14 positions, especially higher level positions, can take  
15 three, four months between the time the applicant applies  
16 and when there's a decision made. I think often if the time  
17 period is that long, some kind of interim status may be  
18 appropriate. I know I for one have gotten calls from people  
19 saying, "Is the NRC still alive? Has this gone into the  
20 black hole or what has happened?" Especially on those kinds  
21 of positions that are going to drag on, you might want to  
22 consider some kind of interim notice.

23 MS. MASON: Those are the things we're working on.

24 MR. CRANFORD: Good afternoon. I'd like to speak  
25 to you a few minutes about the Office of IRM and some of the

1 things that we've got going in the area of public  
2 responsiveness.

3 Could I have the first slide or the next slide?

4 [Slide.]

5 MR. CRANFORD: We've been concentrating our  
6 efforts in the area of electronic media. These are projects  
7 that we've been working on with the various offices to  
8 develop. They're not as yet mature processes and we are  
9 still in the process of developing policies and guidelines  
10 governing their use. One example is the draft report on the  
11 responsiveness to the public, which is now available on the  
12 electronic forum on the World Wide Web. Although the report  
13 is available, we're continuing to develop policies and  
14 guidelines and are planning to make other agencies'  
15 documents available in this manner.

16 As far as electronic mail is concerned, this  
17 really reaches a very broad audience. We consider it fairly  
18 low tech. It's available to all employees and it deals with  
19 low volume of information.

20 The electronic bulletin boards, yet still a fairly  
21 broad audience, somewhat more technical than electronic mail  
22 and low to moderate information volume.

23 The final area that we've been working on, and  
24 I'll talk in a little more detail on each one of these, is  
25 electronic information exchange. This really goes to a

1 fairly specific audience, primarily the utilities, licensees  
2 and other government agencies. It's much more technical  
3 than the other two and here we're dealing with a much more  
4 higher volume of information.

5 Next slide, please.

6 [Slide.]

7 MR. CRANFORD: As I said before, the electronic  
8 mail is available to all employees and it's available  
9 through the agency's AUTOS Network. It's very easy to  
10 communicate with other federal and state agencies,  
11 licensees, national laboratories and the public. It's a  
12 fairly inexpensive source. We've got a one time annual fee.  
13 There are no connect charges. Also provides for file  
14 transfers of larger amounts of data. We've also got an  
15 agency list server which enables us to accommodate fairly  
16 easily worldwide distribution of information.

17 As far as the volume that we've experienced with  
18 Internet mail, there have 6,000 or 7,000 messages per week.  
19 Two-thirds of this traffic is incoming traffic. These might  
20 include such organizations as Commonwealth Edison, Electric  
21 Power Research Institute and a high volume of our list  
22 server information is coming to us from list servers  
23 operated by such organizations as the National Performance  
24 Review.

25 Next slide, please.

1 [Slide.]

2 MR. CRANFORD: Another media that we've been  
3 experimenting with is the electronic bulletin board. This  
4 service is provided to us through the NTIS, Department of  
5 Commerce's national information service located in  
6 Springfield. They're charged with making federally funded  
7 scientific, technical and related business information  
8 available to the general public. We provide via a 1-800  
9 number toll free service to any member of the public or  
10 anyone who desires information on an NRC bulletin board that  
11 is up at the Fedworld. Fedworld is also available over the  
12 Internet using Mosaic and other tools.

13 Next slide, please.

14 [Slide.]

15 MR. CRANFORD: This is a current listing of the  
16 electronic bulletin boards that are available at Fedworld.  
17 The first one, the electronic rulemaking board, is really  
18 several boards. An example of what's up under that board  
19 would be NUREG and reg guide rules, decommissioning rule,  
20 record retention rule, reduction of reporting requirements  
21 rule. As you can see, there are quite a few others. Unless  
22 there's a specific question on one, let's go to the next  
23 slide.

24 Next slide.

25 [Slide.]



1 CHAIRMAN SELIN: Well, there is one question.

2 MR. CRANFORD: Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN SELIN: When the agreement states were in  
4 yesterday they said how much nicer it would be if they could  
5 get the source approval documents not in hard copy. I was  
6 quite surprised to hear that those are distributed only in  
7 hard copy. Some part of your work plan is to look for  
8 documents that we may not generate ourselves but for which  
9 we are a clearinghouse and rather systematically go through  
10 a program seeing if we can't encourage the generators to  
11 give us electronic material.

12 MR. CRANFORD: Yes, we recognize that need and  
13 we'll be working with State Programs to see what we can do  
14 to help them to achieve that.

15 These are the planned electronic bulletin boards  
16 that are planned for inclusion on the Fedworld System.

17 Next slide.

18 [Slide.]

19 MR. CRANFORD: We've also been involved --

20 CHAIRMAN SELIN: This slide is a bureaucrat's  
21 delight. It almost doesn't have any words on it.

22 MR. CRANFORD: Another project that we've been  
23 involved in electronic information exchange. The thrust  
24 here is to be able to work with particularly the licensees  
25 in moving a large volume of information from them to us and

1 vice versa. To facilitate this process, we conducted --  
2 well, as a matter of fact, we've been working through the  
3 NIRMA, which is the Nuclear Information Record Management  
4 Association. We've been working with that group for about  
5 18 months to develop an approach to accomplishing this. We  
6 had a workshop, Mr. Chairman, that you spoke at and --

7 CHAIRMAN SELIN: I made some commitments at.

8 MR. CRANFORD: You certainly did. The emphasis  
9 was on high technology, use of computers and improved  
10 telecommunication technology. So, we're working internally  
11 to make that happen.

12 We've also been working with NRR on an EIE pilot.  
13 Now, this pilot is really not designed to produce a template  
14 that we would use to conduct EIE operations. It's really  
15 just to try to determine what types of problems that we  
16 would encounter in this approach in moving large volumes of  
17 information between the two organizations. So, what we're  
18 really doing is we'll evaluate the results and see what  
19 types of infrastructure changes we'd have to make, what  
20 types of software we'd need, et cetera, to make that work in  
21 the long term.

22 CHAIRMAN SELIN: The trap here is that the general  
23 public may not have the kind of resources or sophistication.  
24 It can't be cut off. If we and our licensees communicate  
25 only in binary, it's sort of hard for the rest of the world

1 to read into that. So, we have to make sure that -- it's  
2 very important that our business be made more efficient and  
3 it's easier for the licensees to get in and out, but you  
4 have to make sure that access is not cut off to people who  
5 don't have sophisticated systems and are willing to spend  
6 large amounts of money for communications.

7 [Slide.]

8 MR. CRANFORD: Next slide talks about the other  
9 IRM initiatives and I think one of these does attempt to  
10 address the issue that you just raised and it's point 2, the  
11 evaluation of all new information systems that we are  
12 developing to ensure that the public dissemination needs are  
13 considered as we're building the system as opposed to  
14 backfitting something. But these are the types of things  
15 that, in addition to the electronic media initiatives that  
16 I've talked about, that we're also working on.

17 At this point, unless there are further  
18 questions --

19 CHAIRMAN SELIN: Mr. Cranford, I think this is  
20 very good. It's all infrastructure though. One thing I'd  
21 like you to be concerned about, both you and I guess Mr.  
22 Blaha. The bottom-up approach inevitably means that you're  
23 going to get things done in great detail but sort of funny  
24 inconsistencies from project to project because they have  
25 been done from the bottom up. I was really struck by how

1 variable the projects are in the way they take advantage of  
2 electronic communications. Some of these projects could  
3 have been written 20 years ago and others were really up to  
4 date. I would hope that the program offices which have a  
5 lot of attention about what they want to communicate but  
6 some of whom are not all that sophisticated about how they  
7 might want to communicate, I would hope they would receive  
8 your attention, whether they request it or not, to try to  
9 bring all of those areas into the electronic age.

10 MR. CRANFORD: Yes. I believe as we encounter  
11 downsizing and the attempt to accomplish greater  
12 efficiencies through automation and information technology  
13 that that will come about. But you're absolutely right, we  
14 need to work with the offices to make sure they --

15 CHAIRMAN SELIN: The NRR stuff was really  
16 sophisticated, the NMSS stuff didn't really take advantage  
17 of electronics at all and there are other contrasts.

18 MR. CRANFORD: Right.

19 DR. BATES: Next slide, please.

20 [Slide.]

21 DR. BATES: In the correspondence area, we formed  
22 two teams. The first team, with my group, looked at process  
23 and timeliness on correspondence. Walt Oliu with the Office  
24 of Administration looked at the quality.

25 [Slide.]

1 DR. BATES: On the process, the current management  
2 directive, which is 3.57, provides guidance on the response  
3 times, preparation of interim replies and acknowledgements  
4 and assigns responsibility to office directors and regional  
5 administrators for designating control officers to  
6 coordinate and control correspondence. This management  
7 directive works pretty well at the present time. We looked  
8 at it. We found that each of the offices has its own  
9 tracking system for correspondence. Some offices have  
10 tracking systems at multiple levels. This is one area where  
11 problems have occurred in the past and the potential  
12 continues for problems to occur when correspondence is  
13 assigned to one office and is then transferred to another  
14 office.

15 So, a couple of our recommendations deal with  
16 assuring that there are positive controls on reassigning the  
17 process from one office to another and in the long run  
18 looking at some sort of an integrated tracking system that  
19 would have an overall system of control in the agency.

20 CHAIRMAN SELIN: You mean the letter has been at  
21 NRC for six months, but I've only had it for three days, so  
22 why I do have to get back?

23 DR. BATES: Yes.

24 [Slide.]

25 DR. BATES: On timeliness, we went back and looked

1 at calendar year 1994 for letters that came to the  
2 Commission for a response. This is yourselves, the  
3 Commissioners, and not staff level. The average Commission  
4 response time was a little over 17 and a half days.  
5 However, 30 percent of those required 20 or more days. What  
6 we've really got to attack, I think, is the ones that --  
7 that 30 percent that was out there in that very long time  
8 frame.

9 Our recommendation, recognizing that some things,  
10 in fact, will require lengthy responses or perhaps several  
11 responses and some back and forth with the person who wrote  
12 the letter originally, would be to provide at least an  
13 interim response to all correspondence within 15 working  
14 days, even if a final response can't get out. All the  
15 responses that are sent out should provide an NRC contact in  
16 the form of the name of a responsible individual and a phone  
17 number so that a person, when they start wondering what's  
18 happening or comes up with some additional questions, can  
19 call somebody here at the agency and find out what's  
20 happening to their correspondence and get an update.

21 COMMISSIONER ROGERS: What about the situation  
22 though where you haven't really identified the contact or  
23 the person who has to deal with the issue that's in the  
24 letter? That may take a little bit of time to make that  
25 identification. In that time and before an interim response

1 comes out, there could be the two weeks, three weeks period.  
2 I wonder is it possible to have some kind of a simple  
3 routine acknowledgment that goes out that says, "We received  
4 your letter. It's being disposed of internally in some way,  
5 but if you haven't heard from us, this is a number you might  
6 call," just so that there is a contact before the final  
7 contact gets done.

8 DR. BATES: We talked about that.

9 COMMISSIONER ROGERS: Yes.

10 DR. BATES: Congressional Affairs acknowledges all  
11 letters that come in from Congress within three days.

12 COMMISSIONER ROGERS: Well, I wasn't thinking of  
13 Congress.

14 DR. BATES: We talked about whether or not  
15 something similar should be done for everything else. I  
16 think the feeling was that if we got an interim response or  
17 something out within 15 days, that probably, rather than  
18 acknowledging something at three to five days and then  
19 getting another answer out ten days later, there wasn't a  
20 balance on the amount of paper that was going to go out.  
21 It's a good consideration.

22 COMMISSIONER ROGERS: I mean it might even be a  
23 postcard.

24 DR. BATES: It could be, right, a postcard.

25 COMMISSIONER ROGERS: It doesn't necessarily have

1 to be a letter, but at least an acknowledgment. "We got it.  
2 If you're really antsy, this is a number you can call, but  
3 that won't be the number for the final response."

4 DR. BATES: Sometimes it's clear that it takes a  
5 couple of days, three days maybe, sometimes even a week  
6 before the correspondence gets to the person who's actually  
7 going to be drafting a reply.

8 COMMISSIONER ROGERS: Right.

9 [Slide.]

10 DR. BATES: In the area of quality, the review  
11 group looked at a sample of correspondence that had gone  
12 out, looked at the drafts that had gone through the process  
13 and reviewed up through the management chain, looked at the  
14 final copies. They found generally that many of the drafts  
15 were not well focused for the recipient of the letter.  
16 There was a lot of bureaucratic language and legalese in  
17 many of the letters as original drafts.

18 Looking at improvements on that, they have worked  
19 with the Office of Personnel. Personnel is developing a  
20 pilot course that's going to be scheduled for March and then  
21 a final course scheduled to begin in April. The intent is  
22 to get staff members who routinely work on correspondence to  
23 sit through these workshops and get a better understanding  
24 of what's a good response for members of the public and to  
25 gear that response to the audience which it's going to go



1 to.

2 ADMIN is also putting together a desk guide for  
3 quality correspondence to be distributed to the staff and  
4 it's to include some concise guidance and examples they  
5 should follow in putting together replies.

6 COMMISSIONER ROGERS: Well, you know, desk guides  
7 are great, but they tend to sit on the desk. What you  
8 really need is you really need workshops or something that  
9 keep these things alive. Having gone once is not --

10 DR. BATES: It needs to be a continuing process  
11 clearly.

12 COMMISSIONER ROGERS: It has to be reinforced.

13 DR. BATES: And we've had some courses in the past  
14 and I think there needs to be a continual look at this.  
15 We've had some discussions on what we can do to elicit some  
16 feedback from some of those that we have responded to and  
17 what's the response time and did it satisfy your questions.

18 CHAIRMAN SELIN: The main thing about it is just  
19 not to drop the ball. The fact that management is  
20 interested, as long as they stay interested, is having a  
21 salutary effect.

22 MR. ZIMMERMAN: Okay. With regard to NRR  
23 initiatives, I'm glad to discuss a number of our key  
24 initiatives which are either underway or under  
25 consideration. These include licensing actions, management

1 of allegations, public petitions and emergency preparedness.

2 Next slide, please.

3 [Slide.]

4 MR. ZIMMERMAN: With regard to licensing actions  
5 which would include requests from licensees that require our  
6 approval, items such as tech spec amendments, exemptions to  
7 regulations and code reliefs, we evaluate our responsiveness  
8 to licensee requests by tracking the inventory and the age  
9 of the licensing actions. Currently we have about 1300  
10 licensing actions in NRR. It's down considerably from about  
11 2500 that we had back in 1990. However, the inventory is  
12 starting to increase over the past couple of years. The  
13 number of submittals have been going up, in part we believe  
14 through the CBLA process.

15 The median age, however, has continued to drop  
16 steadily since 1990. At that time the median age was about  
17 one year. Now it's down to about six months.

18 We have a priority scheme at NRR using a scheme of  
19 1 through 4, with 1 being the most safety significant and  
20 the most urgent from the utility's standpoint and 4 being  
21 the least safety significant and the least urgent. We have  
22 right now about 60 percent of the licensing actions are in  
23 the priority 3 category and about 30 percent are in the  
24 priority 2. So, about 90 percent of them are in the higher  
25 echelons.

1           Since we have increased the priority for CBLAs  
2     from priority 4 to priority 3, that's added about an  
3     additional 10 percent to the inventory in the priority 3  
4     area. We expect that this emphasis on CBLA will ultimately  
5     free up both utility and NRC resources to concentrate on  
6     matters of greater safety significance.

7           Currently our goals again strive primarily for  
8     age, 80 percent of our items less than one year, 95 percent  
9     less than two years, and we try to have them all done by  
10    three years. Right now we're a little shy of that goal.  
11    We're still striving for it. But in concert, we're also  
12    considering if we want to revise our goals and perhaps take  
13    in the priority more rather than just solely on age in  
14    determining what our responsiveness goals should be.

15           CHAIRMAN SELIN: I'd like to point out, we've had  
16    some conversations in this, that you only can go so far in  
17    redoing priorities, especially in something like licensing  
18    actions. Really to reengineer the process itself is clearly  
19    justified. So much activity goes into it, so much effort  
20    and I think it would be highly worthwhile to discuss this  
21    with the EDO already so it's not a surprise. But it would  
22    be highly worthwhile to take a look at the process to see  
23    how many people are involved, do we really need that, and  
24    can we have some kind of a scan at the beginning to say, "Is  
25    this a major issue or is it fairly straightforward?" In

1 other words, whether it might be a streamline process that's  
2 appropriate for some but not other actions and to actually  
3 reduce the amount of work expended in doing it. In order  
4 words, simplifying the process.

5 Obviously you have to manage priorities, but maybe  
6 we can reduce the overall workload directly and it would be  
7 worth investing some time and effort now before we go  
8 through the manpower cuts that are coming up in the next few  
9 years, to invest the time now to reduce the total work that  
10 will be needed when we have fewer people to do --

11 MR. ZIMMERMAN: I agree, Mr. Chairman. We are  
12 looking at ways that we can improve our efficiency along the  
13 lines that you just mentioned. Some of the areas that we've  
14 already taken steps, improve standard tech specs and line  
15 item improvements help in that area to reduce the number of  
16 resources that go into the area, but we're continuing to  
17 look hard at the area for additional efficiencies.

18 CHAIRMAN SELIN: You might look at something  
19 fairly formal, like getting some contract help on these  
20 reinventing the business processes. It may be important  
21 enough not to just rely on our own internal. We can always  
22 do things 5 percent better and take a systematic look at  
23 streamlining these processes.

24 MR. ZIMMERMAN: Agreed.

25 Next slide, please.

1 [Slide.]

2 MR. ZIMMERMAN: In the area of management of  
3 allegations, last year the agency conducted a review team  
4 initiative report with recommendations on how we can improve  
5 our management of allegations. Steps that are currently  
6 underway are to revise the management directive that houses  
7 our policies and procedures for management of allegations.  
8 We're also looking at providing allegeders with a pamphlet  
9 informing them of how we handle allegations, similar to what  
10 we have done in the 2.206 area with the pamphlet that's used  
11 there.

12 We're looking at trying to better inform allegeders  
13 of how they can protect their employee rights through going  
14 to the Department of Labor. We're also establishing a toll  
15 free number which we expect to have in use later on in the  
16 year for allegeders to be able to report concerns to us. We  
17 also intend on informing allegeders of our limitations in  
18 being able to always protect their identity, so they don't  
19 assume that in all circumstances their identity can be  
20 protected.

21 We're also looking at responding to credible  
22 reports of retaliation before they occur by getting involved  
23 in confronting the utility in situations. We've gone to the  
24 allegeder initially and orchestrated such an involvement from  
25 the agency. We're also looking at trying to improve the way

1 we provide feedback to allegeders by consistently sending  
2 acknowledgment letters out within 30 days and status update  
3 letters every six months.

4 We recently established an agency allegations  
5 advisory that had program oversight responsibility for  
6 allegation management in the agency. This individual will  
7 conduct annual audits not only of the regions but also the  
8 program offices, NRR and NMSS here in Headquarters. We also  
9 intend on performing staff training and this management  
10 directive is issued later on this month.

11 Next slide, please.

12 [Slide.]

13 MR. ZIMMERMAN: In the area of public petitions,  
14 this is one of the primary means that the public has to  
15 raise issues to the NRC where they request specific action  
16 to be taken by the agency on one of our licensees. We've  
17 recently reviewed the process in place to try to make it  
18 more effective and more easily understood and also held a  
19 workshop where we received extensive feedback. The review  
20 that was performed determined that petitioners were not  
21 afforded the opportunity that we wanted them to have to be  
22 able to be part of the process.

23 Recent improvements as a result of that report  
24 that began in the fall are issuance of a Management  
25 Directive 8.11 which institutionalizes improvements on our

1 handling of public petitions, as I mentioned a moment ago  
2 about the issuance of a simple pamphlet that explains the  
3 process to the petitioner. Also offering an informal public  
4 hearing if the individual raises safety significant concerns  
5 with new information. That's something that would be  
6 offered to the individual in certain circumstances and allow  
7 that individual to meet with the NRC and deal directly  
8 across the table and have much more involvement than the  
9 previous processes had. Also arranging a point of contact  
10 within the staff to try to simplify communications just  
11 coming into one person.

12 We've recently established monthly status updates  
13 reports and we've put that on the electronic bulletin board.  
14 There's been a good number of enquiries since we've put that  
15 into the bulletin board.

16 We're also sending acknowledgement letters upon  
17 receipt of the petition and including the pamphlet and we're  
18 looking at statusing with the petitioner where we are in  
19 reviewing the petition at least every 60 days. We've  
20 established a goal of 120 days from date of the  
21 acknowledgment letter for issuance of the director's  
22 decision.

23 Next slide, please.

24 [Slide.]

25 MR. ZIMMERMAN: In the area of emergency

1 preparedness, it's an integral part of our defense in depth  
2 philosophy. We have several possible improvements that are  
3 under consideration. We've not made as many strides in this  
4 area as we have in the ones that I previously discussed.  
5 They're still pretty much in the discussion stage. Some of  
6 the possibilities that we're including are looking to  
7 simplify our interactions with FEMA, try to simplify our  
8 procedures in an MOU to allow requests that we send to FEMA  
9 and vice versa to result in more timely products.

10 We're also looking at taking advantage when we get  
11 a simple enquiry from the public to just try to answer it  
12 over the phone rather than necessarily resort to letter  
13 writing. We've found in the times that we've used that that  
14 the individual has been very satisfied with just getting the  
15 return phone call.

16 CHAIRMAN SELIN: That's faster and cheaper.

17 MR. ZIMMERMAN: Also, considering holding public  
18 meetings after certain emergency planning inspections.  
19 Right now we hold public meetings with FEMA after emergency  
20 planning exercises. We're considering doing the same thing  
21 to certain inspections, following certain inspections.

22 Last we're looking for methodologies through  
23 public meetings and workshops to involve the public early on  
24 in our onset of some significant rulemakings in the  
25 emergency preparedness area.



1           That concludes my remarks.

2           MR. TAYLOR: That concludes our presentation.

3           CHAIRMAN SELIN: Commissioner Rogers?

4           COMMISSIONER ROGERS: I thought it was a very  
5 helpful, excellent overview. I had a couple of questions  
6 about the SECY that perhaps I can raise. They deal really  
7 with this question, I think, the Chairman mentioned, sort of  
8 follow-on and that you have to keep checking to see how  
9 things are going. One was that one of the things that we're  
10 doing is ensuring that NRC switchboard operators are  
11 knowledgeable about NRC offices, functions and key personnel  
12 so that they may properly direct calls more quickly and  
13 accurately. We can have all kinds of internal ways of  
14 trying to give information to those folks and so on and so  
15 forth.

16           What are we doing in terms of seeing how well it's  
17 working? Do we place calls ourselves to the system and ask  
18 questions such as a citizen might ask and find out what the  
19 responses are? I think the system has to be tested and we  
20 can do all we want to prepare people, but then we've got to  
21 find out how well it's working. I think that you have to  
22 have some way of checking that.

23           MR. CRANFORD: Well, the telephone operators  
24 actually are contracted. It's handled by the Office of IRM.  
25 To be perfectly frank with you, I don't know the answer to

1     that question, whether or not we do have some type of a  
2     quality control process.

3                 COMMISSIONER ROGERS: Well, I think you've got to.  
4     How do you know if it's working?

5                 MR. CRANFORD: Yes.

6                 MR. BLAHA: When we first started this exercise, I  
7     laid out a scope of what we ought to be doing. One of the  
8     aspects was a feedback mechanism. It turned out that in our  
9     sense of trying to get the ideas forward and out for  
10    discussion, we didn't develop all those aspects. But in our  
11    next implementation phase, that's one of the things I'm  
12    going to ask each office to identify, is how do we get  
13    feedback on whether what we're doing is working or not.  
14    That's, I think, a good example.

15                COMMISSIONER ROGERS: Well, you might get  
16    feedback, of course, from users, but I think you need a kind  
17    of independent check that we place on the system ourselves.  
18    Dummy calls go through with requests for information or  
19    problems and see how they're dealt with. That's one way to  
20    test it.

21                The other -- and just along those lines with  
22    respect to, I guess, the licensees having to do with  
23    accident information, there's a statement made on page 25 of  
24    the report about the population within ten miles of a  
25    nuclear power plant is provided with information on the

1 radiological emergency plans that would impact them and the  
2 actions they're expected to take in the unlikely event of a  
3 severe accident at the plant. This information is provided  
4 annually to those residents by each nuclear power plant  
5 licensee. Do we check that? Do we check to see that they  
6 have done it every year or what it is that they do?

7 MR. ZIMMERMAN: I think on a sampling basis we do  
8 that as part of our inspection program, but we can't say  
9 that we do it in all cases.

10 COMMISSIONER ROGERS: Yes. Well, it's something  
11 that's easy to overlook, I would think, but I think that  
12 that's worth checking to make sure that that is done because  
13 after awhile everybody thinks it's being done and it's being  
14 done. In fact, the last time we sent out -- somebody may  
15 tell you that, "The last time we really sent out this  
16 information was five years ago," and it's really supposed to  
17 be done every year. The population changes, there are  
18 people that move in and out and all that sort of thing, all  
19 the reasons why you would do it annually.

20 So, I think that's worthwhile checking up on to  
21 make sure that licensee are, in fact, doing that.

22 I just think that this whole effort is really an  
23 excellent one, very important, and that it can't be done on  
24 a one shot basis though, I think, that it's got to be  
25 something that from time to time is reviewed and tested in

1 various ways ultimately to see how well we're achieving what  
2 we want to achieve here. I think it's an excellent effort,  
3 but I'd like to see a commitment to a report back to the  
4 Commission a year from now or so on how well it's going.  
5 But again, in doing that, I think you need some baselines to  
6 compare it to and that is going to take some thought. If  
7 you're going to tell us how much has been accomplished under  
8 this program a year from now, you have to know where we are  
9 today.

10 So, I would hope that you'd be able to think a  
11 little bit about some measures of accomplishment. Rather  
12 than just putting programs in place, how do they really  
13 work?

14 Thank you very much.

15 COMMISSIONER de PLANQUE: You've already answered  
16 a lot of my questions in writing and I appreciate that.

17 One comment and it's more of a comment than a  
18 question. I noticed in the section on decommissioning of  
19 sites and facilities there's a piece about the availability  
20 of decommissioning plants going in the Federal Register and  
21 offering an opportunity for hearing. Just a general caution  
22 to make sure that anything in here along those lines is  
23 fully consistent with any of our rules already existing or  
24 in the process, so that we don't wind up with some  
25 contradictory protocol.

1           Other than that, I appreciate all the work that  
2           has gone into this. I think you've all done a wonderful job  
3           and I look forward to the results.

4           CHAIRMAN SELIN: I have a few observations and  
5           comments I'd like to make before the briefing comes to a  
6           close.

7           First, I'd like to express my appreciation and the  
8           Commission's to the two Jims, to Pat Norry, Eileen Mason,  
9           Gerry Cranford, Andy Bates, Roy Zimmerman, to the whole team  
10          that's working on this and I hope you'll spread this to the  
11          large number of people who have done the basic work.

12          Despite the very high quality of the report, I do  
13          think there are a couple areas that could be improved on.  
14          For instance, either before or as we publish the report, I  
15          notice that some offices did not participate in this project  
16          at all. Even though they may not be part of the staff in  
17          that sense, to the outside they're still the Commission and  
18          Commission level offices themselves. The regional office  
19          participation was very spotty. Some offices that did  
20          participate focused their attention primarily on internal  
21          efficiency aspects while others concentrated entirely on the  
22          public outreach. As I mentioned earlier, some made  
23          extensive use of computer technology in improving their  
24          responsiveness to the public while others really didn't use  
25          the technology at all.

1 I can't help but notice that if you file a  
2 petition under 2.206 you do a lot better off than if you  
3 file under 2.802 and the procedures that are there. You've  
4 done the basic work, but now some of the consolidation has  
5 to be to look across and make sure that there aren't  
6 differences where there are no distinctions, that we handle  
7 petitions similarly regardless of what kind and we try to  
8 use the same media.

9 It's, of course, inevitable in a bottom-up  
10 approach that you get these inconsistencies and they're just  
11 growing pains but before the final report is published I  
12 think you have to take a look at that.

13 Another area of concern, both of the other  
14 Commissioners have -- boy, I'm looking forward to the day  
15 when I don't have to say both of the other Commissioners.  
16 Both of the other Commissioners have already mentioned that  
17 we need a formal mechanism for following up on the effort in  
18 the long run. The agency is making numerous promises to the  
19 public in this report and in spite of all of that, each  
20 office effectively implement the proposals. The impact is  
21 monitored, the impact on the agency and the public and that  
22 new revisions or new initiatives are proposed as needed.

23 We all recognized that the staff report, even when  
24 published in the final report, is really only the first  
25 stage of a long process, but we need to convert this from a

1 one-shot effort to an ongoing process without losing all  
2 this wonderful energy in kind of bureaucratic torpor or what  
3 have you. In other words, we need to consolidate but still  
4 keep the push.

5 Finally and perhaps most importantly, the paper --  
6 and this is really very ironic, but the paper doesn't really  
7 address how we're going to reach the public to comment on  
8 the paper. We're not going to just publish it in the  
9 Federal Register because one of the things we noted is that  
10 many of the people we're trying to reach don't have a  
11 subscription to the Federal Register, don't consider that as  
12 casual reading.

13 So, I think the agency would be better served if  
14 the staff spent at least a few days developing a plan for  
15 getting the report into the hands of our customers. This is  
16 not a plan of action, it's a proposal that we're putting out  
17 to get some public comment from the people that we really  
18 care about, our customers, and get some feedback.

19 So, in addition to Federal Register notice, I  
20 think we need to have a press release, we need to send it to  
21 the Congress, our oversight committees, any individual  
22 member that has sent us any constituent concerns. We need  
23 to get it to state and local governments, into the PDRs and  
24 the local PDRs. More than that, every one of our offices  
25 must have a list of contacts of people who they deal with

1 regularly, who they care about. I know 25 people whose  
2 phone calls have caused some of this to come out and I'm  
3 sure we all do. So, spend some time trying to think about  
4 who do we need to get out and don't worry that it will be  
5 sort of unfair because you thought of Jones and you forget  
6 Smith, so Jones got a call and Smith didn't. But we really  
7 need to get this report out quite broadly and make it clear  
8 that we'd like to get answers to it and not just to fall  
9 back on, "Oh, we published it in the Federal Register and we  
10 put it on Internet and therefore it's been out for comment.  
11 And we should use, of course, the electronic bulletin boards  
12 to advertise the availability of the report and our desire  
13 to receive comments as much as we can. Not incidentally, we  
14 should send one copy of the report to the NPR office. If  
15 you're going to do the work, you might as well get credit  
16 for it and there might be somebody there who will read it  
17 and give us some comments as well.

18 So, I plan to vote to publish the paper as is.  
19 I'll have some comments, but I won't make them prerequisites  
20 to publishing the paper. But I would ask that the EDO  
21 incorporate in the report the separate plans submitted by  
22 the Office of the Secretary and the Office of Public  
23 Affairs, that you consider adding material from other  
24 offices that did not participate and material when it  
25 becomes available and make it a truly agency-wide effort,



1 and that we develop a reasonable plan consistent with the  
2 aims of the project before obtaining the public comments.

3 Finally, and again not as a prerequisite for  
4 publishing but in parallel while we're waiting for the  
5 comments, that we, which means you, develop plans for  
6 providing systematic follow-up to the proposals as we  
7 implement the results of the report.

8 So, thank you very much. It's just a dynamite  
9 job, just a terrific job.

10 [Whereupon, at 3:11 p.m., the meeting was  
11 concluded.]

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached description of a meeting of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission entitled:

TITLE OF MEETING: BRIEFING ON NRC'S INITIATIVES ON  
RESPONSIVENESS TO THE PUBLIC -  
PUBLIC MEETING

PLACE OF MEETING: Rockville, Maryland

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday, February 2, 1995

was held as herein appears, is a true and accurate record of the meeting, and that this is the original transcript thereof taken stenographically by me, thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under the direction of the court reporting company

Transcriber: Carol Lynch

Reporter: Peter Lynch



# **INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE RESPONSIVENESS TO THE PUBLIC**

**Presented by:**

**James M. Taylor, EDO**

**James L. Blaha, AO/OEDO**

**Patricia Norry, ADM**

**Eileen Mason, OP**

**Gerald Cranford, IRM**

**Andrew Bates, SECY**

**Roy Zimmerman, NRR**

**February 2, 1995**

# **OBJECTIVE**

- **Improve NRC's responsiveness to the public in terms of timeliness and quality**
- **Increase awareness of NRC employees that public responsiveness is important**

# **APPROACH**

- **All offices/regions asked to look at their activities**
- **Anecdotal examples of poor public responsiveness**
- **All employee announcement soliciting ideas**
- **Focus groups/interviews**
- **Review existing practices to solve problems**
- **Look beyond existing practices to find ways to improve responsiveness**

# **INFRASTRUCTURE CHANGES**

- **NRC policy**
- **Public access to documents**
- **Staff orientation & training**
- **Electronic media**

## **NEXT STEPS**

- **Incorporate commission comments**
- **Publish for public comment**
- **Continue implementation process**

# **ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES**

- **ADM**
- **OP**
- **IRM**
- **Correspondence (SECY)**

# **MISSION RELATED CHANGES**

- **NRR**



# **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES**

- **FOIA**
- **Contracting process**
- **Security**
- **Documents in PDR**

# **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT PROGRAM (FOIA)**

## **FOIA user conference**

- **Scheduled for March 23, 1995**
- **Announce in Federal Register with RSVP by mid March**
- **Send direct invitations to principal FOIA users for 1993–1994**
- **Participants to include:**
  - **FOIA customers**
  - **Senior NRC official**
  - **DOJ**
  - **NRC OGC**
  - **NRC FOIA officials & office staff**

# **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT PROGRAM (FOIA)**

## **FOIA Customer Satisfaction Survey**

- **Develop survey**
- **Obtain OMB clearance**
- **Survey for 3-month period (approx. 300)**
- **Analyze results**
- **Re-survey FY96, if appropriate**

# **CONTRACTING PROCESS**

**Initiatives to make the procurement process more efficient**

- **Procurement reinvention lab**
- **Establish timeliness standards for interaction**
- **Streamline procedures for payment to contractors**

# **SECURITY PROGRAM**

**Initiatives to improve the headquarters security force**

- **Conduct baseline and follow-up surveys**
- **Conduct feasibility study of video-based visitor access system**
- **Improve security officer public awareness and interpersonal skills**

# NRC POLICY ON PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

## Background

- MGT DIR 3.4 “Release of Information to the Public” (9/1/93) establishes NRC policy
- Survey of FOIA requests completed in 1993

<u>Subject</u>	<u>No. Requests</u>	<u>% of Total FOIA</u>
NMSS Licensees = Material Licensees	53	8%
Specific Office Documents = Named Documents	30	5%
Contracts = Documents Related NRC Issues Contracts	14	2%
Plant-Specific = Specific Power Plant	13	2%
Plants-General = Generic Issues	7	1%
Foreign Reactor = Power Plants Outside USA	6	1%

# **NRC POLICY ON PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS**

- **Actions to increase routine placement of documents in PDR**
  - **Identify FOIA requests that resulted in release to PDR.**
  - **Request offices identify types of records for routine disclosure to PDR.**
  - **Provide feedback on FOIA/PDR experience.**

## **OP INITIATIVES**

- **Improve telephone communication**
- **Incorporate concept of public responsiveness in existing courses**
- **Provide new course, “Quality Customer Service,” to NRC work groups**
- **Improve responsiveness to applicants for employment**



## **IMPROVE TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION**

- **Distribute, and emphasize adherence to, telephone communication guidelines to employees and operators**
- **Offer module on telephone techniques from “Orientation to NRC Office Procedures”**
- **Publicize videotapes on telephone skills, available at individualized learning center**

## **PUBLIC RESPONSIVENESS IN EXISTING COURSES**

- **Orientation for new employees sets the expectations**
- **“Clear Writing” and “Media Training Workshop” teach effective communication skills**
- **“Effective Communications for NRC Inspectors” and “Gathering Inspection Information Through Interviews” emphasize professionalism**
- **Videotapes on customer service, telephone skills, defusing conflict are available at individualized learning center**

## **“QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE” COURSE**

- **Offered to ADM’s Administrative Service Center, and all of IRM**
- **Can be custom designed for any NRC work group**
- **Includes telephone skills, strategies for dealing with angry people, techniques for providing effective quality service**

## **RESPONDING TO APPLICANTS FOR EMPLOYMENT**

- **Acknowledgment of application sent to applicants within 7-10 working days**
- **Questions from applicants answered quickly throughout the process**
- **Applicants advised of final outcome of applications within 10 working days of final disposition**

# **IRM ELECTRONIC MEDIA INITIATIVES**

- **Electronic Mail via Internet**
- **Electronic Bulletin Boards**
- **Electronic Information Exchange**

## **ELECTRONIC MAIL VIA INTERNET**

- **Rapid, inexpensive, world-wide service**
- **Provision for attached file transmittal**
- **Agency listserver established**
- **6000-7000 external messages/week at NRC**

## **ELECTRONIC BULLETIN BOARDS**

- **Electronic bulletin board provided through the National Technical Information Service (NTIS).**
- **NTIS electronic bulletin board system known as Fedworld.**
- **Fedworld provides public toll-free access to NRC systems.**

# **NRC ELECTRONIC BULLETIN BOARDS AT FEDWORLD**

- **Electronic Rulemaking Bulletin Boards**
- **Status of 10 CFR 2.206 petitions**
- **Enforcement program review/comment**
- **Public meeting notices**
- **Improved technical specifications**
- **Public Affairs system information**
- **Generic communications electronic distribution**



# **NRC ELECTRONIC BULLETIN BOARDS PLANNED AT FEDWORLD**

- **Public document room system**
- **Materials and reactor license**
- **Health physics**
- **Low-level waste shipping manifest**
- **Plant morning reports**
- **NMSS sealed source devices**
- **NMSS fuel cycle safeguards**

# **ELECTRONIC INFORMATION EXCHANGE (EIE)**

- **EIE workshop**
- **NRR EIE pilot**

## **OTHER IRM INITIATIVES**

- **Mosaic/World Wide Web and NRC Home Page**
- **Evaluation of all new information systems to ensure public dissemination needs are considered**
- **Toll-free telephone service**
- **Expanded facsimile service**
- **Modern voice mail system**
- **Federal information relay service for hearing-impaired**
- **Energy science and technology software center**

# **CORRESPONDENCE**

- **Process**
- **Timeliness**
- **Quality**

# **FINDINGS/IMPROVEMENTS**

- **Process**

- **Current management directive generally provides guidance**
- **Multiple tracking systems**
- **Need better intersystem controls**
- **Consider a unified tracking system**

# **TIMELINESS**

- **For CY 1994 (186 letters)**
- **Average commission response time — 17.7 days**
- **30% (56) required 20 or more days**
- **Answer or provide interim response to all correspondence within 15 working days**
- **Provide an NRC contact in all answers and interim responses**

# **QUALITY**

- **Response quality uneven**
- **Too much bureaucratic/legalese**

# **IMPROVEMENTS**

- **“Quality of correspondence workshop” to be offered to NRC employees**
  - **Personnel office developing a pilot course scheduled for March 1995**
  - **Final course scheduled to begin April 1995**
- **“Quick desk guide to quality correspondence” to be distributed to staff**
  - **To include concise guidance, samples of incoming correspondence, model replies, and a handbook of punctuation and word usage.**



# **NRR INITIATIVES**

- **Licensing Actions**
- **Management of Allegations**
- **Public Petitions**
- **Emergency Preparedness**

## **LICENSING ACTIONS**

- **Inventory of 1293 actions as of 9/30/94**
- **98% of actions result from licensee requests, 2% are NRC generated**
- **Actions are assigned priorities (1 - 4)**
- **60% are Priority 3 items**
- **Separate tracking and higher priority assigned to CBLA actions**
- **Goals and objectives may be reexamined**

# **MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGATIONS**

**Management Directive 8.8 revision to be issued in February 1995**

**Planned improvements:**

- **Assist industry workers**
- **Protect allegor identity**
- **Respond to credible reports of retaliation**
- **Provide feedback to allegers**
- **Track, trend, and monitor allegations**
- **Conduct self assessments and training**

# **PUBLIC PETITIONS**

## **Actions Completed:**

- **Issued Management Directive 8.11 and Pamphlet in September 1994**
- **Established an electronic bulletin board**

## **Actions Ongoing:**

- **Offer opportunity for informal public hearing, as appropriate**
- **Provide copies of correspondence to participants**
- **Identify a single agency contact**
- **Acknowledge receipt of petitions**
- **Notify petitioner of status every 60 days**
- **Goal of issuing decision document within 120 days of acknowledgement letter**

# **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

- **Dialogue with FEMA to interact more efficiently**
- **Respond to public inquiries by telephone, when appropriate**
- **Conduct public meetings, as appropriate, following EP-related inspections**
- **Encourage public input in significant rulemakings (publicity, meetings, and workshops)**