

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Public Meeting Summary

August 11, 2015

Title: Public Meeting to Discuss the Plan for Updating Cost-Benefit Guidance Phase 1

Meeting Identifier: 20151022

Date of Meeting: Thursday, July 16, 2015

Location: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Headquarters, One White Flint North, Rockville, MD

Type of Meeting: Category 3

Purpose of the Meeting:

To describe the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) plans for the two-phased approach to revise NRC cost-benefit guidance documents, primarily NUREG/BR-0058, "Regulatory Analysis Guidelines of the U.S. NRC," NUREG/BR-0184, "Regulatory Analysis Technical Handbook," and NUREG-1409, "Backfitting Guidelines." This plan identifies potential changes to current methods and tools related to performing cost-benefit analyses in support of regulatory, backfit, and environmental analyses. This meeting provided an opportunity to provide feedback on phase 1 of the scope and restructuring of the NRC's cost-benefit guidance documents, which includes current activities that affect cost-benefit guidance.

General Details:

The NRC conducted a public meeting scheduled from 8:30 – 11:00 a.m. eastern standard time (EST) and ran approximately an hour and a half long. The meeting began with an introduction of all participants and a review of meeting ground rules, followed by a presentation on the NRC's plan for updating cost-benefit guidance phase 1 by Ms. Pamela Noto. The presentation focused on phase 1 of the scope and restructuring of the NRC's cost-benefit guidance. The majority of the meeting was dedicated to answering questions on how and when (what phase) specific Commission directed and approved activities for updating the guidance would be addressed.

Approximately 20 people participated in the meeting, both in-person and remotely by webinar or by using a teleconference line. The participants included 15 NRC staff members. Three participants asked questions and 2 participants provided comments. Meeting participants included representatives of the National Energy Institute, Westinghouse, and ICF International.

Summary of Presentation:

The NRC is updating its cost-benefit guidance, last published in 2004 as “NUREG/BR-0058, Rev 4”. This update focuses on combining the information contained within NUREG/BR-0184 and NUREG-1409 into one document, NUREG/BR-0058 and capturing best practices for cost estimating and for the consideration of qualitative factors.

The accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant in Japan raised questions regarding how the NRC’s regulatory framework considers offsite property damage and the associated economic consequences if a significant radiological release occurred from an NRC-licensed facility. In response to these questions, the NRC staff recommended enhancing the currency and consistency of the existing regulatory framework through updates to cost-benefit analysis guidance documents including harmonizing cost-benefit guidance across the agency in both reactor and materials programs arenas in SECY-12-0110, “Consideration of Economic Consequences in the NRC’s Regulatory Framework.” The Commission approved this recommendation and directed the staff to identify potential changes to current methodologies and tools to perform cost-benefit analysis in support of regulatory, backfit, and environmental analyses. The Commission also directed the staff to provide a regulatory gap analysis prior to developing new cost-benefit guidance. In response to Commission direction the staff prepared SECY-14-0002, “Plan for Updating NRC’s Cost-Benefit Guidance,” SECY-14-0087, “Qualitative Consideration of Factors in the Development of Regulatory Analyses and Backfit Analyses,” and SECY-14-0143, “Regulatory Gap Analysis of the NRC’s Cost-Benefit Guidance and Practices,” all of which are being addressed in phase 1 of the cost-benefit guidance update.

In SECY-14-0002, the staff recommended a two-phased approach to revise the content and structure of cost-benefit guidance documents. Phase 1 is an administrative phase that will begin harmonizing regulatory guidance across business lines by restructuring and pursuing non-policy revisions. This phase will consist of revising and consolidating the three NUREG documents into a single NUREG, updating data, methods and references and addressing audit findings and case study recommendations. Phase 2 is a multi-year technical phase and will identify and discuss potential policy issues identified by gap analysis that could affect cost-benefit guidance and update determinations for consequences, probabilities, and uncertainties, as necessary.

In addition to updating NRC’s cost-benefit guidance, the NRC staff is also updating NUREG-1530, “Reassessment of NRC’s Dollar per Person-Rem Conversion Factor Policy” and the NRC staff is planning to work on a new replacement energy cost NUREG to replace two older NUREGs that address the costs for replacement energy on a short-term and long-term basis, respectively.

Public Participation Themes:

During the brief public question and answer session of the meeting, NRC staff addressed questions on the following topics:

- Qualitative factors addressed in phase 1 - yes;
- Commission approval of updated NUREG – The Commission will be notified of the draft version of the NUREG and the Commission will vote on the final version;

- Outline of update document - yes;
- Roles of the NRC participants in the working group – Each office contributes specific expertise to the working group: (1) Office of Nuclear Regulatory Regulation (NRR) - project lead, regulatory analysis, cost estimating, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), (2) Office of Nuclear Reactor Research (RES) - reactor systems engineering, severe accident analysis, and dispersion modeling, (3) Office of New Reactors (NRO) – reactor engineering, (4) Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response (NSIR) – security and incidents, (5) Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) – material licensing, (6) Office of General Counsel (OGC) – backfitting; and
- How to provide cost information and how to do that most efficiently – open discussion.

Action Items/Next Steps:

- NRC staff will provide a draft Table of Contents with the meeting summary
- NRC will hold public meetings as needed to elicit public feedback

Additional Information:

- Meeting agenda – ML15217A420
- NRC staff presentation - ML15189A463
- Draft Table of Contents – ML15217A424

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- How to provide cost information and how to do that most efficiently

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