



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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January 31, 2019

MEMORANDUM TO: Margaret M. Doane
Executive Director for Operations

FROM: Brian J. McDermott */RA/*
Deputy Director for Engineering
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: FUTURES ASSESSMENT: STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Executive Director for Operations an update on the Futures Assessment effort, as well as next steps.

Background

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) continues to face an evolving future. Changes stem, for example, from the planned (and projected) premature shutdown of operating reactors, the review of new reactor designs, the large number of Agreement States, and an aging NRC workforce. Even with these changes, the U.S. nuclear program will remain among the largest worldwide, and the NRC must continue to provide a commensurate regulatory presence. The NRC staff is taking steps to expand the consideration of our changing environment to help ensure that the NRC is poised to effectively deliver its mission in the coming years.

In October 2018, the staff formally kicked off an effort, known as the "Futures Assessment," to enhance the scope of considerations used in existing planning activities, such as strategic workforce planning. As a first step toward planning for potential future scenarios (i.e., 2025 and beyond), the staff awarded a contract to a leading, global management consulting firm (the Firm). The Firm augmented the staff's capabilities by providing expertise in scenario planning, management consulting resources, and a broad set of contacts in the public and private sectors.

Over a period of approximately 4 months, the Firm worked closely with NRC staff to accomplish three objectives:

CONTACT: Tara Inverso, OEDO
301-415-1024

- Develop scenarios that describe how the NRC's mission areas could evolve in the future (i.e., 2025 and beyond). These scenarios include internal and external drivers, across all NRC mission areas.
- Assess how these future scenarios could impact the NRC and identify potential challenges.
- Provide the NRC key takeaways to consider as the potential futures evolve.

Final Report

The Firm provided its final report, "The Dynamic Futures for NRC Mission Areas," on January 30, 2019. The report is publicly available in the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System under Accession No. ML19022A178. The final report is informed by interviews with NRC staff and managers, as well as external stakeholders, and workshops with a cross section of NRC staff and managers from program and corporate support offices. The NRC's senior leaders were engaged throughout the effort.

The final report discusses the process that the Firm used in developing the potential scenarios and impacts, it describes four diverse future scenarios that could unfold and their associated impacts on the NRC, and it provides key takeaways that the NRC may consider in preparing for the evolving future.

Next Steps

With the completion of the contractor phase of the Futures Assessment project, and the availability of the final report, the staff's focus will shift to the evaluating the key takeaways and identifying actions that will help the NRC prepare for 2025 and beyond. In doing so, the staff will seek feedback, broadly, from the NRC staff. Ultimately, any actions that are identified will be rolled into existing planning activities for implementation and preparation for the future. These existing planning activities include Enhanced Strategic Workforce Planning (Environmental Scan, Workload Forecasting, Staffing Analysis, etc), budget formulation, and development of the strategic plan.

By no later than June 2019, the staff will provide a SECY paper to the Commission that:

- summarizes high-level insights and outcomes from the final report,
- describes feedback obtained from the NRC staff and how that feedback factored into the Futures Assessment evaluation;
- discusses how the staff will monitor conditions to determine which scenarios may be unfolding; and
- identifies actions that would be beneficial across all scenarios for near-term implementation, as well as actions that would be beneficial to particular scenarios for implementation as those scenarios unfold.

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