

March 22, 1996

Bill Russell

Dear Bill,

Because we were unable to talk together yesterday, you are out today, and I am out next week, I wanted to make a few comments about the TOPNUX '96 Conference and our meeting last Tuesday.

I have heard from the Program Committee that you received a "form" letter with regard to their assuming you had accepted their invitation. It would be great if you could attend since the licensing process and licensing of the ABWR, System 80+, and AP600 are of great interest. In addition, the move by some European countries to consider severe accident scenarios as part of their design basis needs to be counter balanced with the U.S.'s point of view.

With regard to our recent "Senior Management" meeting on the AP600, I have a growing concern about closure of issues and the management of the plan/schedule to reach FDA. As you have stated, we need to identify the key issues and work toward resolution. I have instructed my people to prepare for and arrange meetings with your technical staff to resolve issues such as containment accident management. I have been told that certain NRC individuals are difficult to contact. If that is the case, the matter should be escalated. Notwithstanding your comments about scarcity of resources, I expect Westinghouse people to be able to make contact with the appropriate NRC personnel to support this certification program in a more timely manner.

I find the management of the plan/schedule to be frustrating. We need to make sure that we work proactively to identify hard spots up front and avoid a process that is too serial. Westinghouse has made phased submittals to avoid surprises. Yet the schedules discussed last Tuesday do not appear to consider any "credit" for such an approach to future activities. Furthermore, I sense a reluctance to move ahead to the point of some personnel appearing to look for excuses to avoid closure.

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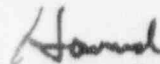
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Let me cite two examples. In the area of T/H Uncertainty, Westinghouse was under the impression that the February 29 presentation sufficiently outlined the success path and sought feedback on the plan presented. The NRC response, on March 19, was that the approach is conceptual and needs documentation. To wait 19 days and have to have a "Senior Management" meeting to get that feedback is unnecessary. It makes me wonder that if we hadn't had our Tuesday meeting, how long would it have taken for Westinghouse people to understand that the NRC was not planning on feedback until more documentation was sent. A second example is in the area of Tech Spec. It took a "Senior Management" meeting for both Westinghouse and NRC project people to learn that the staff reviewer is being put on rotational assignment, and because of this assignment the review may be 1 or 2 months delayed. Once again, to learn of this in a "Senior Management" meeting is unnecessary, but further, such a delay for the reasons given is simply unacceptable.

We collectively need to better manage the process. We need focus on key issues and to ensure that in key review areas dedicated reviewers are assigned at appropriate times.

I will be out of the country next week, but would like to discuss this matter further with you.

  
Howard