Ms. Janet R. Schlueter, Senior Director
Fuel and Radiation Safety
Nuclear Generation Division
Nuclear Energy Institute
1201 F Street, NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC  20004-1218

SUBJECT:  U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION GUIDANCE ON COVID-19 RELATED REQUESTS FOR REGULATORY RELIEF FOR FUEL CYCLE FACILITIES

Dear Ms. Schlueter:

On January 31, 2020, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a Public Health Emergency (PHE) for the United States to aid the nation’s healthcare community in responding to COVID-19. On March 11, 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak was characterized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) recognizes that during the current COVID-19 PHE, licensees may experience challenges in meeting certain regulatory requirements. As we navigate this unprecedented time, the NRC continues to respond to regulatory relief requests in a manner that demonstrates our commitment to following the NRC’s Principles of Good Regulation (independence, openness, efficiency, clarity, and reliability) while performing our mission. In keeping with these principles, the NRC has taken several steps to provide the fuel cycle industry with the information to assist in navigating regulatory challenges that may occur during the pandemic.

On April 7, 2020, John Lubinski, Director of the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, issued a letter to all NRC Licensees authorized to possess byproduct, source, and special nuclear material regarding regulatory relief during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Public Health Emergency (ADAMS Accession No. ML20094G166). This letter outlines some methods available to licensees for obtaining relief from regulatory requirements. These methods fall broadly into different categories which include exemptions from regulatory requirements, amendments to license conditions, or technical specifications, and enforcement discretion.

To provide the transparency, clarity, and efficiency that is especially needed by licensees and the public during this time, the NRC staff has prepared a document entitled “Temporary Staff Guidance – Fuel Facility Regulatory Relief Requests Related to COVID-19” TSG-DFM-2020-01, (ADAMS Accession No. ML20108E911), available at https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/covid-19/materials/fuel-cycle.html. This document provides staff guidance on the basic framework for processing COVID-19 related requests for regulatory relief at fuel facilities. The guidance contains information on the process that will be followed in response to fuel cycle facility requests for relief as well as the information that the staff will request of licensees in order to evaluate licensee requests for relief.
These procedures are intended to enhance the efficiency of NRC staff in responding to the needs of licensees and the public. The internal staff guidance is publicly available and licensees may choose to review the guidance when preparing relief requests.

If you have any further questions about this matter, please contact Mr. James Downs or Mr. Kevin Ramsey of my staff. Their contact information is:

Mr. James Downs: e-mail: James.Downs@nrc.gov  
telephone: 301-415-7744

Mr. Kevin Ramsey: e-mail: Kevin.Ramsey@nrc.gov  
telephone: 301-415-7506

Sincerely,

Andrea L. Kock

Andrea L. Kock, Director
Division of Fuel Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards

Enclosure:
List of Addressees

cc: Those on the enclosed list
SUBJECT: U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION GUIDANCE ON COVID-19 RELATED REQUESTS FOR REGULATORY RELIEF FOR FUEL CYCLE FACILITIES CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

Dated: April 24, 2020

DISTRIBUTION:
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DTiktinsky, NMSS KRamsey, NMSS JZimmerman, NMSS JDowns, NMSS

ADAMS Accession Number: ML20108F636 *via e-mail

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OFFICIAL RECORD COPY
LIST OF FUEL FACILITY ADDRESSEES

BWXT Nuclear Operations Group, Inc.
Docket No. 70-27
License No. SNM-42

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Centrus Energy Corp.
Docket Nos. 70-7004; 70-7003
License No. SNM-2011; SNM-7003

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Framatome
Docket No. 07001257
License No. SNM-1227

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License No.: SNM-2019

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GNF-A
Docket No. 70-1113
License No. SNM-1097

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Honeywell
Docket No. 40-3392
License No. SUB-526

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License No. SNM-124

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Docket No. 70-3103
License No. SNM-2010

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Docket No.: 70-00754
License No.: SNM-960

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Westinghouse
Docket No.: 70-1151
License No.: SNM-1107

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