



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

April 27, 2020

Dr. Partha Chowdhury, Director
Nuclear Radiation Laboratory
University of Massachusetts-Lowell
One University Avenue
Lowell, MA 01854

SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL – STATUS OF THE
REGULATORY AUDIT AND UPDATE REGARDING THE RENEWAL OF
FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. R-125 (EPID NO. L-2015-RNW-0001)

Dear Dr. Chowdhury:

The University of Massachusetts Lowell (UML) holds U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Facility Operating License No. R-125 for the operation of the UML Research Reactor (UMLRR). By application dated October 20, 2015 (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML16042A015), as supplemented, UML applied for renewal of the UMLRR operating license.

On July 19, 2019 (ADAMS Accession No. ML18092B090), the NRC staff sent UML a letter enclosing requests for additional information (RAIs) identifying additional information needed for the NRC staff to continue its review of UML's renewal application. The NRC staff's letter requested that UML provide responses to the RAIs by October 21, 2019, and stated that based on this response date, the NRC staff expected to complete its review and make a final determination on the renewal request by June 30, 2020.

By letter dated January 13, 2020 (ADAMS Accession No. ML20009E848), the NRC staff accepted a request by UML to extend the deadline to complete its RAI responses to February 18, 2020. In its letter, the NRC staff stated that based on the information that UML requested additional time to provide, and the new response date, the NRC staff continued to expect to complete its renewal review by June 30, 2020.

By letter dated February 4, 2020 (ADAMS Accession No. ML20021A315), the NRC staff informed UML that it would conduct a regulatory audit beginning February 10, 2020, and continuing as necessary, and provided UML with an audit plan. The NRC staff began the regulatory audit to address open items remaining following its review of RAI responses and other supplemental information submitted by UML in 2019 and 2020.

During the audit, UML stated that it would submit additional information supplementing its renewal application (including a follow-up TS submittal and other information) on the UML docket to address information needs identified by the NRC staff, to help eliminate the need for further RAIs. Additionally, UML stated that it would provide further documents for NRC staff review on the online audit portal discussed in the audit plan (in addition to documents that UML had already provided on the portal as of the date of this letter). During a teleconference on April 21, 2020, UML stated that based on its current operational status (due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 public health emergency), it expected to need until at least May 31, 2020, to provide all the additional information on the docket and portal. UML stated that its timeframe for

submitting the information would continue to depend on its future operating status, but that it would keep the NRC staff informed of any updates.

The NRC staff plans to keep the audit open at least until UML has provided the additional documents discussed above on the audit portal, and the NRC staff has reviewed these documents, but the NRC staff may extend the audit beyond this time as necessary. As discussed in the NRC staff's letter dated February 4, 2020, the NRC staff will issue a regulatory audit summary following the completion of the audit. The summary will include a description of any information identified during the audit that will need to be docketed (if not already docketed) to supplement the application.

Based on UML submitting the information discussed above by May 31, 2020, the NRC staff is providing a revised date of September 30, 2020, by which it expects to complete its review and make a final determination on the renewal request. However, this date could still change due to several factors including a need for further RAIs, unanticipated changes to the scope of the review, unsolicited supplements to the application for the renewal, and others. If the forecasted date changes, the NRC staff will notify you in writing of the new date and an explanation of the reason for the change.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 301-415-4067, or by electronic mail at Edward.Helvenston@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Edward Helvenston, Project Manager
Non-Power Production and Utilization Facility
Licensing Branch
Division of Advanced Reactors and Non-Power
Production and Utilization Facilities
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-223
License No. R-125

cc: See next page

University of Massachusetts - Lowell

Docket No. 50-223

cc:

Mayor of Lowell
City Hall
Lowell, MA 01852

Mr. Leo Bobek
Reactor Supervisor
University of Massachusetts - Lowell
One University Avenue
Lowell, MA 01854

Department of Environmental Protection
One Winter Street
Boston, MA 02108

Jack Priest, Director
Radiation Control Program
Department of Public Health
Schrafft Center, Suite 1M2A
529 Main Street
Charlestown, MA 02129

Ms. Samantha Phillips, Director
Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
400 Worcester Road
Framingham, MA 01702-5399

Test, Research and Training
Reactor Newsletter
Attention: Ms. Amber Johnson
Department of Materials Science
and Engineering
University of Maryland
4418 Stadium Drive
College Park, MD 20742-2115

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ADAMS Accession No.: ML20114E059 *concurred via email**NRR-106**

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