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September 5, 1983

To: Mel Silberberg
From: Herb Isbin *Herb Isbin*

Within the past month, a variety of accounts has been made available with the implication that the present NRC Source Terms will be shown to be much too conservative. I am referring to the following publications as examples:

EPRI J, July/Aug 1983 (Reactor Accidents: A Global Reassessment of Consequences)
ANS News, Aug 1983 (expectations of the ANS and IDCOR studies)
Chem Engr Prog, Aug 1983 (R. C. Vogel's Robert E. Wilson Award Lecture)
Congressional Research Service Review, May 1983 (Potential for Reducing the Predicted Consequences of Nuclear Power Plant Accidents)
Nuclear Safety, May/June, 1983 (LWR Safety Research at EPRI: An Update)
AEP INPO, Aug 1983 (reference to and enclosure of EPRI J article; reference to the NRC draft report on the Price-Anderson Act)

Additionally, the Sept 26-29, 1983, ANS Topical Meeting and the Oct 30-Nov 3, 1983, ANS Winter Meeting will include discussions of the source terms. I am planning to attend the Topical Meeting. All inputs to your Office are to be received without bias and must be judged with the standards you are establishing.

You have set goals for improving the data base and this is being accompanied by a program for verification and validation of models. The need and importance of sensitivity analyses have been recognized. (However, the oral presentations at the July 28-29, 1983, Peer Review Group Meeting did not match my expectations.) The methods and criteria you have established for receiving peer and advisory inputs are more than adequate; however the difficult assignment is what you do with the inputs to obtain prompt and effective resolutions. I see the elements for the bookkeeping, but I do not know how you are handling the technical arrangements for the resolution and effective incorporation of any input on scenarios, data base, and modelling.

You have established important and parallel efforts to augment the activities through the use of ad hoc study groups, such as the one for evaluating modes and location of containment failures. Key elements are the participants you have invited, the assignments being given, and the leadership being provided. Results from these groups have yet to be made available.

I expect the tempo and challenges of the inputs to intensify, placing increasing demands on your Office to receive and evaluate improvements in the data base, modelling, and in the evaluation of the course of postulated accidents.

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The concluding thought is that although you have a well conceived program, increased attention must be given to the thorough, competent, and critical evaluation of the many inputs you have already received and will be receiving, the resulting impact on the BCL studies, the establishment of an improved data base, and the assurance that you are developing the proper analytical tools for evaluating consequences.