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November 21, 1996

John C. Hoyle
Secretary of the Commission
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
ATTN: Chief of Docketing and Services Branch
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Mr. Hoyle:

We have reviewed several of the Strategic Assessment Issue Papers and have prepared comments on individual issue papers. These papers are enclosed. We also support the comments of the Organization of Agreement States regarding all issue papers. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these important direction-setting issues for NRC. The extension to the comment period was also appreciated. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

William J. Sinclair, Director
Division of Radiation Control

c: Dianne Nielson, Ph.D., Executive Director, UDEQ
Bob Quillin, Chairman, Organization of Agreement States

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STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT ISSUE PAPER
DSI 14 - PUBLIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES
STATE OF UTAH COMMENTS

The basic question asked by NRC was: "What approach should NRC take to optimize its communication with the public?"

All options put forth by NRC have merit in the context of ensuring that effective communication occurs between NRC and the impacted stakeholders on a particular issue. It appears that an integrated approach which combines the best approaches from each option may be the best approach. Utah agrees with the Organization of Agreement States comments in this area which also promotes an integrated approach to optimize NRC's communication with the public.

One shortfall in public communication perceived by Utah is a general lack of understanding of NRC's administrative process, especially when it comes to challenges of NRC actions. It might be helpful to develop brochures or handouts that concisely chart the administrative process for major actions (such as license amendments, Environmental Impact Statements, Technical Evaluation Reports) for the public and make such information available through state radiation control programs. As an example, when NRC promotes the idea of open, public meetings of enforcement activities, there is no statement made that "the public" cannot participate and can only observe. In the broadest sense, it might be helpful for the public to be provided information regarding what "open meetings" mean in each context that NRC operates. Utah would support new NRC initiatives involving the public in enhanced rulemaking, revised 2.206 processes, and enforcement conferences.

NRC should maximize the use of the electronic Superhighway through the Internet to disseminate information. NRC should be commended for having the DSI documents available electronically and allowing the public to comment electronically. As an Agreement State program, we have found some of the information provided by Internet useful as well as having the availability to contact NRC staff by electronic mail via the Internet.

Submitted by:

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