

January 16, 1997

NOTE TO: Annette Vietti-Cook, OCM/EG

FROM: John T. Larkins, ACRS/ACNW *John T. Larkins*

SUBJECT: "WHY ACRS/ACNW MEMBERS NEED TO RETAIN THEIR UNESCORTED ACCESS"

As a follow-up to our phone conversation, I am providing the following reasons why the ACRS/ACNW members should retain their unescorted access. Also, a policy to limit access to anyone who performs works for a licensee could be an oversimplified solution to a concern or problem that neither the ACRS nor ACNW have been a part of nor are they likely to cause. This policy could impact three ACRS and two ACNW members who work at universities with nonpower reactors, and if you include members who do contract work for the industry, we have one ACRS and one ACNW member who would be impacted. Additionally, if we include the Department of Energy as a licensee or a potential licensee, then we would impact three additional ACRS members. This policy could potentially impact a total of 10 out of 13 current ACRS/ACNW members. Following is a list of other reasons for allowing the ACRS/ACNW members to retain their unescorted access:

- (1) Neither the ACRS nor ACNW hire members who are employed by a utility or materials licensee.
- (2) Frequency of meetings at headquarters - some members spend 6-10 days a month (including some Saturdays) at the NRC to attend full Committee and/or subcommittee meetings. During this time, some members also meet periodically with individual Commissioners or NRC management and staff to discuss items of mutual interest. It would not be cost effective for staff to escort members to every meeting.
- (3) Most of the members have "Q" clearances based on the need to review confidential/secret restricted data. This level of security clearance is granted only after extensive background investigation. The granting of a "Q" clearance indicates members can be trusted with national security information. Certainly they can be trusted not to abuse the privilege of unescorted access.
- (4) Members are, because of the number of days they are employed as Special Government Employees, restricted in their representation of private parties before the NRC. They are,

therefore, not likely to be at the NRC on other than ACRS or ACNW business.

- (5) Unescorted access reinforces the message to staff and others that the ACRS and ACNW are a trusted, vital resource integral to the Commission's decision-making process.

Lastly, I would note that ACRS members have had unescorted access for almost 40 years, with no problems. Hopefully this information is helpful and please call if I can be of further assistance. Also, I would like to be informed of any proposed policy which adversely impacts ACRS/ACNW member access.

cc: R. Brady, DSEC