



NRC NEWS

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NRC-NAS REACH AGREEMENT ON SPENT FUEL PUBLIC REPORT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) have reached agreement on the release of an unclassified public version of a classified NAS report on the safety and security of spent nuclear fuel storage. The public report was issued by NAS earlier today.

“We are pleased to have been able to work together with NAS to provide this information to the public. The challenge we have faced has been in striking the appropriate balance between the public’s right to know and our obligation to protect information that would be useful to terrorists,” said NRC Chairman Nils J. Diaz.

The NRC believes the NAS study is important, is giving the results and recommendations serious consideration and has an internal action plan to address the NAS recommendations. The NRC agrees with many of the points made by the Academy and the study’s findings reflect and support NRC actions that were already underway or in the planning stages.

Prior to Sept. 11, 2001, spent fuel was already well protected by physical barriers, armed guards, intrusion detection systems, area surveillance systems, access controls and access authorization requirements for employees working inside nuclear power plants. Since then, the NRC has issued no fewer than nine sets of mandatory instructions or guidance to nuclear plant operators to improve security of nuclear power plants, including spent fuel in storage. Since early 2002 – well before Congress requested the NAS study – the NRC has been conducting significant analysis and reviews which resulted in a number of safety security improvements to provide additional protection of spent fuel.

To ensure that NRC maintains the appropriate balance between information security and openness, NRC has scrutinized the NAS report to ensure that the appropriate information is available to the public.

The NRC’s responses to NAS recommendations can be found in the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Report to Congress on the National Academy of Sciences Study on the Safety and Security of Commercial Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage, as an attachment to the Chairman’s March 14 letter to Senator Domenici. The report is available at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/congress-docs/correspondence/2005/> .

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