

December 1, 2010

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Jaczko
Commissioner Svinicki
Commissioner Apostolakis
Commissioner Ostendorff

FROM: Commissioner Magwood */RA/*

SUBJECT: INTERACTIVE LEARNING CENTER FOR WHITE FLINT
HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX

During my visit to Spain for the 30th anniversary of the Spanish Nuclear Safety Council (CSN), I had the opportunity to tour CSN's Information Center in Madrid. The Center is devoted to interactive displays that provide visitors with objective information about the history of nuclear technology, explanations of subjects such as radiation and risk, and an overview of the role of the Spanish nuclear regulatory authority. The displays and interactive modules are professionally designed, of very high quality, surprisingly compact in terms of space utilization, and have an excellent reputation among educational institutions, student groups, and adult visitors to the Center. In addition to providing CSN an outstanding public outreach and educational tool, the Center also helps forge a strong public relations bond between CSN the local community in Madrid and its suburbs.

I believe that the NRC should consider establishing a similar information center at NRC headquarters. Although we have established a public outreach program, conducted educational grant programs, and fostered openness in our regulatory processes, these activities are generally focused on specific plants, pending regulatory actions, or support for specific academic programs or individuals. Aside from a limited educational section at our website, support for the Montgomery County Science Fair, and a volunteer teaching assistance program in local schools, we have not yet developed a high quality, modern, interactive educational approach that would enable the NRC to communicate to the general public important information about the agency and its mission as well as support community programs, particularly the encouragement of student interest in science. Since many members of the agency's staff have demonstrated on many occasions that they are personally and professionally committed to public outreach and the education of young people, I believe they would find filling this gap in our outreach endeavors to be very rewarding and an important enhancement to our mission.

To this end, the Commission should encourage the staff to consider developing plans for an interactive learning center for the White Flint Headquarters complex on a schedule consistent with the construction of the White Flint 3 and the refurbishment of White Flint 1 and 2. It may be appropriate to consider potential synergisms with other planned activities such as the agency's new Training Center, which will include a variety of displays and models and continued enhancements and modifications to the NRC website.

I believe this project deserves attention by the NRC staff. Of all the interactive museums and information centers, including the CSN's center, with which I am familiar, all were designed and constructed to implement an effective communication/educational objective.

SECY, please track.

cc:

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