

Those permitted to intervene become parties to the proceeding, subject to any limitations in the order granting leave to intervene, and have the opportunity to participate fully in the conduct of the hearing, including the opportunity to present evidence and cross-examine witnesses.

If a hearing is requested, the Commission will make a final determination on the issue of no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will serve to decide when the hearing is held.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration, the Commission may issue the amendment and make it immediately effective, notwithstanding the request for a hearing. Any hearing held would take place after issuance of the amendment.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves a significant hazards consideration, any hearing held would take place before the issuance of any amendment.

A request for a hearing or a petition for leave to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff, or may be delivered to the Commission's Public Document Room (PDR), located at One White Flint North, Public File Area O1 F21, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland, by the above date. Because of the continuing disruptions in delivery of mail to United States Government offices, it is requested that petitions for leave to intervene and requests for hearing be transmitted to the Secretary of the Commission either by means of facsimile transmission to 301-415-1101 or by e-mail to hearingdocket@nrc.gov. A copy of the petition for leave to intervene and request for hearing should also be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and because of continuing disruptions in delivery of mail to United States Government offices, it is requested that copies be transmitted either by means of facsimile transmission to 301-415-3725 or by e-mail to OGCMailCenter@nrc.gov. A copy of the request for hearing and petition for leave to intervene should also be sent to Mr. John R. McPhail, Nebraska Public Power District, Post Office Box 499, Columbus, NE 68602-0499, attorney for the licensee.

Nontimely filings of petitions for leave to intervene, amended petitions, supplemental petitions and/or requests for hearing will not be entertained

absent a determination by the Commission, the presiding officer or the presiding Atomic Safety and Licensing Board that the petition and/or request should be granted based upon a balancing of the factors specified in 10 CFR 2.714(a)(1)(i)-(v) and 2.714(d).

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated January 30, 2004, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's PDR, located at One White Flint North, Public File Area O1 F21, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland. Publicly available records will be accessible from the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System's (ADAMS) Public Electronic Reading Room on the Internet at the NRC Web site, <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Persons who do not have access to ADAMS or who encounter problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, should contact the NRC PDR Reference staff by telephone at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to pdr@nrc.gov.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 6th day of February, 2004.

For The Nuclear Regulatory Commission,
Michelle C. Honcharik,
Project Manager, Section I, Project Directorate IV, Division of Licensing Project Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Best Practices To Establish and Maintain a Safety Conscious Work Environment; Request for Comments and Announcement of Public Meeting

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Request for comments and announcement of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The 1996 NRC Policy Statement, "Freedom of Employees in the Nuclear Industry to Raise Safety Concerns Without Fear of Retaliation," provides the agency's broad expectations with respect to licensees establishing and maintaining a Safety Conscious Work Environment (SCWE); that is, an environment in which employees are encouraged to raise safety concerns both to their own management and to the NRC without fear of retaliation. In a March 26, 2003 Staff Requirements Memorandum, the Commission directed the staff to develop further guidance, in consultation with stakeholders, that

identifies "best practices" to encourage a SCWE. The NRC staff is now proceeding to develop that guidance.

As an initial step, the NRC will be holding a public workshop on February 19, 2004, at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, O-1G16, Rockville, Maryland from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. to discuss multiple issues. These issues include: (1) The format such guidance should take; (2) Effective ways to encourage employees to raise safety concerns; (3) Effective processes to review and respond to concerns; (4) The scope of training on SCWE principles; (5) Tools to measure the health of the SCWE; (6) The role of the contractor; and, (7) The role of senior management in preventing claims of retaliation. To stimulate stakeholder's thinking and encourage a dialogue at the public meeting, the NRC has prepared for comment an outline of a "Best Practices" document. This document can be found on the NRC's Web site at www.nrc.gov by selecting What We Do, Allegations, and then Best Practices to Establish and Maintain a Safety Conscious Work Environment. This document is also available in ADAMS at ML040350487. In preparing this document, the staff reviewed the existing guidance provided in the 1996 Policy Statement, including the elements and attributes described therein of a healthy SCWE, and created a draft "Best Practices" outline that expands that guidance or adds new guidance where additional information would help describe best practices to meet the intent of each SCWE attribute.

The NRC's 1996 Policy Statement was directed to all employers, including licensees and their contractors, subject to NRC authority, and their employees. Hence, any further "Best Practices" guidance will also apply to this broad audience. It is important to note that the best practices outlined in this document may not be practical or necessary for all employers. Rather, the purpose of this guidance is to outline what has worked best at some larger licensees to maintain or improve a work environment and ensure its employees feel free to raise safety concerns.

DATES: The workshop will be held on February 19, 2004. The comment period expires on March 19, 2004.

ADDRESSES: The workshop will be held on One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, O-1G16, Rockville, Maryland from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. You may submit comments by any of the following methods. Comments submitted in writing or in electronic format will be made available to the public in their entirety on the NRC Web

site. Personal information will not be removed from your comments. Mail comments to: Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. You may comment at NRC's Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/allegations/practices-outline.html>, or by e-mail to: NRCREP@nrc.gov. Hand deliver comments to: 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on Federal workdays. Fax comments to: Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission at (301) 415-5144. Publicly available documents related to this action may be viewed electronically on the public computers located at the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR), O1F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland. The PDR reproduction contractor will copy documents for a fee. Publicly available documents created or received at the NRC after November 1, 1999, are available electronically at the NRC's Electronic Reading Room at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. From this site, the public can gain entry into the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS), which provides text and image files of NRC's public documents. If you do not have access to ADAMS or if there are problems in accessing the document located in ADAMS, contact the NRC PDR Reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or e-mail to pdr@nrc.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lisamarie Jarriel, Agency Allegations Advisor, Office of Enforcement, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, (301) 415-8529, e-mail LLJ@nrc.gov.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 6th day of February, 2004.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Frank J. Congel,

Director, Office of Enforcement.

[FR Doc. 04-3063 Filed 2-9-04; 11:16 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

State of Utah: NRC Staff Draft Assessment of a Proposed Amendment to Agreement Between the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the State of Utah

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: First notice of a proposed amendment to the Agreement with the State of Utah; request for comment.

SUMMARY: By letter dated January 2, 2003, Governor Michael O. Leavitt of Utah requested that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) enter into an amendment to the Agreement with Utah (the Agreement) as authorized by section 274 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (Act).

Under the proposed amendment to the Agreement, the Commission would relinquish, and Utah would assume, an additional portion of the Commission's regulatory authority exercised within the State. As required by the Act, NRC is publishing the proposed amendment to the Agreement for public comment. NRC is also publishing the summary of a draft assessment by the NRC staff of the portion of the regulatory program Utah would assume. Comments are requested on the proposed amendment to the Agreement and the staff's draft assessment, which finds the program to be adequate to protect public health and safety and compatible with NRC's program for regulation of 11e.(2) byproduct material.

The proposed amendment to the Agreement would release (exempt) persons who possess or use certain radioactive materials in Utah from portions of the Commission's regulatory authority. The Act requires that NRC publish those exemptions. Notice is hereby given that the pertinent exemptions have been previously published in the **Federal Register** and are codified in the Commission's regulations as 10 CFR part 150.

DATES: The comment period expires March 15, 2004. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the Commission cannot assure consideration of comments received after the expiration date.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any one of the following methods. Please include the following phrase, Utah Amendment, in the subject line of your comments. Comments will be made available to the public in their entirety. Personal information will not be removed from your comments.

Mail comments to: Michael T. Lesar, Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

E-mail comments to: NRCREP@nrc.gov.

Fax comments to: Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, at (301) 415-5144.

Publicly available documents related to this notice, including public

comments received, may be viewed electronically on the public computers located at the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR), O1 F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland. The PDR reproduction contractor will copy documents for a fee.

Publicly available documents created or received at the NRC after November 1, 1999, are also available electronically at the NRC's Electronic Reading Room at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. From this site, the public can gain entry into the NRC's Agencywide Document Access and Management System (ADAMS), which provides text and image files of NRC's public documents. If you do not have access to ADAMS or if there are problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, contact the NRC Public Document Room (PDR) Reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737 or by e-mail to pdr@nrc.gov.

Documents available in ADAMS include: The request for an amended Agreement by the Governor of Utah including all information and documentation submitted in support of the request (ML030280380); NRC comments on the request (ML031810623); Utah's response to NRC comments (ML032060090); Utah's additional clarification (ML033640565), and the full text of the NRC Staff Draft Assessment (ML040370585).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dennis M. Sollenberger, Office of State and Tribal Programs, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. Telephone (301) 415-2819 or e-mail DMS4@nrc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Since section 274 of the Act was added in 1959, the Commission has entered into Agreements with 33 States. The Agreement States currently regulate approximately 16,850 material licenses, while NRC regulates approximately 4550 licenses. NRC periodically reviews the performance of the Agreement States to assure compliance with the provisions of section 274. Under the proposed amendment to the Agreement, four NRC licenses will transfer to Utah.

Section 274e requires that the terms of the proposed amendment to the Agreement be published in the **Federal Register** for public comment once each week for four consecutive weeks. This first notice is being published in fulfillment of the requirement.

I. Background

(a) Section 274d of the Act provides the mechanism for a State to assume regulatory authority from the NRC over