

July 19, 2011

Gregory B. Jaczko, Chair
Kristine L. Svinicki, Commissioner
William D. Magwood IV, Commissioner
George Apostolakis, Commissioner
William C. Ostendorff, Commissioner

Dear Commissioners:

We the undersigned respectfully urge you to provide the NRC staff with the resources and direction necessary to fully implement the recommendations from the July 12, 2011, report by the Near-Term Task Force titled "Enhancing Reactor Safety in the 21st Century" as expeditiously as possible. Based on its assessment of the accident at Fukushima Daiichi and its consequences, the Task Force made numerous recommendations to better protect the American public from low probability, high consequence events by reducing vulnerabilities at U.S. reactors and upgrading mitigation measures. While we have significant concerns about the scope of the review undertaken and the adequacy of some of its recommendations, the Task Force's report provides a starting point for improving nuclear safety in the U.S. and should be acted upon by the Commission. Now that these issues have been identified and their resolution outlined, Americans are unnecessarily at elevated risk until the NRC successfully implements these recommendations.

We recognize and appreciate that the scope and complexity of some recommendations means they will take some time to address, even if the full resources of the agency were applied to that effort. We understand that the recommendations made by the NRC's 90-day review cannot be implemented within 90 days. We request that you set a deadline for the adoption of each recommendation, and take appropriate steps to ensure that robust public participation is an intrinsic element of this process. We also suggest you consider how you might answer the following question from Congress when scheduling these deadlines:

Commissioner, wasn't the safety issue that led to this accident specifically raised by the Task Force in July 2011? Why had you not resolved that very issue by the time _____ occurred?

If you have an honest, solid answer, you will be able to look the Congress and the American public in the eyes and say that you took every reasonable action to protect against the tragic outcome. But when such an answer is lacking, there is clearly work to be done with deliberate haste to prevent the low probability event from causing its high consequences.

We commend the Task Force for dedicating their report to the people of Japan, especially those who responded to the accident at Fukushima. The Task Force concluded its dedication with this expression:

It is our strong desire and our goal to take the necessary steps to assure that the result of our labors will prevent the need for a repetition of theirs.

We admire and respect this sentiment. Now it's time for the Commission to do its part and take the steps necessary for this commendable goal to be achieved.

Sincerely (arranged alphabetically by organization name),

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