

Ms Judith Hackitt CBE
Chair of Health and Safety Executive
9 NW Rose Court
2 Southwark Bridge
London SE1 9HS

19 November 2008

Dear Ms Hackitt

NuSAC: Final Report for period 31 October 2008

Following our meeting on 29 September 2008, I agreed to produce a report on outstanding actions in our work programme and recommendations for a successor body. This report is attached.

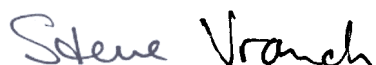
I have reviewed NuSAC's work programme with the Convenors of the Review Groups and can report the NuSAC programme has now been brought to a tidy conclusion. The full state of actions from the NuSAC work programme is available from the Secretariat for reference.

Some of the areas that NuSAC has considered remain matters of concern, as described in our Annual Report 2007/2008 (copy enclosed). We have reviewed our current work programme in light of these concerns and have recommended key priority areas for a successor body.

In view of the changes occurring in the nuclear industry, especially in decommissioning, radioactive waste management and new build, NuSAC firmly believes there should be no delay in setting up the successor body to provide independent advice to HSE on nuclear safety.

hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Steve Vranich'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Steve Vranich
Chair of NuSAC

NuSAC: Final Report for period ending 31 October 2008

Introduction

The Nuclear Safety Advisory Committee ceased in its present form on 31 October 2008. This report summarises the activities of the Committee since the publication of the Annual Report 2007/2008 on 3 July 2008. This report recommends to the Board of the HSE those areas of nuclear safety that should be addressed by a future advisory committee on nuclear safety.

NuSAC activities from July-October 2008

NuSAC's Annual report 2007/2008 published on 3 July 2008 summarises the activities of the Committee up to June 2008. Between July and October 2008, NuSAC has concentrated on:

- Finalising a report on NDA funding and other issues which was sent to the HSE Chair on 31 July 2008.
- Commenting on ND's paper on the siting of nuclear installations NuSAC(2008)P12 which was presented at the July 2008 meeting.
- Responding to the NDA's Radioactive Waste Management Division's consultation on the research and development strategy to support the disposal of nuclear waste.
- Considering what topic areas should be a priority for a successor body.

Recommendations

NuSAC recommends that a successor body is essential in order to provide independent technical advice to HSE on nuclear safety issues outlined below:

Priority A

- The impact on safety of NDA's strategies and its relationship with licensees (particularly as this affects the ability of licensees to fulfil their statutory safety obligations) and with HSE; and ensuring NDA's funding allocations are adequate for safety purposes, particularly for decommissioning and radioactive waste management.
- The means of sharing best practice between licensees and wider industry players in areas of safety performance and management.
- The shortage of staff with nuclear experience and skills and the likely impact on safety.
- Issues surrounding new nuclear power stations, including further developments on siting criteria.

- Safe storage of wastes, spent fuels, plutonium and uranium including retrieval of wastes from Sellafield legacy ponds and silos, storage of highly active liquid waste, and the implications of NDA reviews of waste storage and management options for plutonium.
- How to monitor the fragility of ageing plants, particularly those awaiting decommissioning. Adequate capability in equipment and staff is needed to maintain plant safely.

The adequacy of UK nuclear safety research in all these areas, particularly decommissioning (including ageing plants), waste management (including geological disposal) and new build of nuclear power stations.

Priority B

- How to raise awareness of safety culture and leadership across the SLCs and the regulator. In particular how to encourage and develop improvements in SLCs including workforce engagement. How NII and licensees could best align their approaches in these areas.
- Increasing public awareness of nuclear safety issues, for example in siting of new nuclear power stations.

NuSAC also recommends that:

- NuSAC's previous work to produce an annual report on the safety performance of licensees and contractors, based on data provided by licensees and contractors is taken up and continued by the Nuclear Directors' Forum.
- The successor body should maintain liaison with CoRWM on matters of mutual interest.
- HSE continues to produce the Chief Inspector's report and make it widely available to stakeholders.

Conclusion

NuSAC believes the successor body to NuSAC should be established without delay to provide independent technical advice to HSE on nuclear safety.