

December 10, 1981

THE EPRI ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Electric Power Research Institute

EPRI was conceived in 1972 and started in 1973 following a study by the electric utility industry of its needs and the recommendation that such an institute be established, and as an alternate to a Senate proposal that the government tax electricity to fund a federally-managed R&D program. At the present time, the Institute has 650 industry sponsors representing about 70% of the generating capacity in the country. In 1982 the program support is at a level of \$270 million.

The Institute now has six technical divisions: Electrical Systems, Nuclear Power, Advanced Power Systems, Coal Combustion Systems, Energy Management and Utilization, and Energy Analysis and Environment. In addition, the Institute has an Energy Study Center and manages a number of programs for separately-financed owners groups. These groups have sponsored R&D to address special topics such as steam generator corrosion, pipe cracking, and nuclear safety analysis. The Institute has established a number of nationally distributed, contractor-operated, test centers for underground transmission equipment, high voltage overhead equipment, transmission towers, a nondestructive evaluation center, a test facility for stack gas particulate cleanup, and a battery test facility.

The programs at EPRI have been planned in consideration of, and in cooperation with, the programs of government agencies. To

the extent possible, the programs have also been coordinated with those of U.S. industry and foreign organizations. Program detail and priorities are reviewed periodically with 450 representatives of industry who are members of task forces, division committees, and the Research Advisory Committee. Significant comment on the overall direction of the R&D program has been provided by the Advisory Council.

Policies of the Institute

The thrust of the Institute's activities is to undertake R&D on new and better ways to generate, transport, and use electric power. The initial focus was on longer-term research efforts. Over the years this emphasis has shifted in a major way to nearer-term technical issues which respond to current national priorities. The Institute does not engage in policy studies of the financial, management, or institutional aspects of the electric utility industry.

In terms of external communications, the primary focus has been to provide technical information in a variety of appropriate forms to EPRI member utilities. Technical information is also routinely provided to professional audiences and the utility trade associations, staffs of public utility commissions, and government agencies. EPRI technical information is available to the public upon request, and is also available to the national energy press. While EPRI provides materials and services to inform the public of the state of technology resulting from its work, it primarily relies on its member

utilities to carry out local public information programs relating to utility related technologies.

Finally, in terms of operations, the policy of the Institute has been to contract for research and development with outside organizations in order to: draw on the expertise available nationally; ensure that results of the R&D will be in the hands of organizations interested in bringing those results to a commercial conclusion, make use of existing R&D facilities; and, provide the maximum degree of flexibility in being able to adjust the research program to evolving utility and rate-payer requirements.

Concept of the Advisory Council

In recognition of the fact that the industry committees might not provide an adequate insight to the priorities of the general public, the organizers of EPRI decided that an Advisory Council of distinguished citizens, representing a broad spectrum of the society, should be created to provide guidance on the relation of EPRI goals and priorities to the overall public interest. An important inclusion in the Council membership was the group of seven utility commissioners appointed by NARUC* who, in representing the interests of the ratepayers, could provide an essential input to program discussions. The remaining members of the 25-person Council were drawn from various sectors of

*NARUC: National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissions

society, but representing those with both knowledge pertinent to the electric utility industry and a sincere interest in helping the industry serve the public. The Council, as an advisory group appointed by the Board of Directors, was expected to provide a commentary on the Institute's activities to the president and the Board. It was expected that the Council discussions would embody a diversity of opinion that could provide broad insight into the complexities of a particular problem. The Council was not expected to seek a consensus on views or to serve as a vehicle for resolving conflicts between groups for or against the various activities and policies of the electric utility industry. At the same time, it was recognized that EPRI's programs would be influenced by political, economic, and social trends and because R&D is, by its nature, a long-term activity, the Council could provide valuable advice on these trends.

Specific Tasks for the Advisory Council

1. To review EPRI programs for relevancy and balance in terms of the public interest and in meeting national goals.
2. To advise EPRI on perceived trends in political, economic, and social affairs which impinge on the electric utilities and which, consequently, should be considered in setting EPRI program activities.
3. To provide the NARUC members of the Council, through a review of EPRI programs and policies, with opportunities to inform the staff on regulatory views of the interest of the ratepayers.

4. To undertake or guide appropriate studies at the request of the Board of Directors or the president.

Staff Support for the Advisory Council

EPRI's Information Services Group provides the support staff for the Council's activities: Mr. Richard L. Rudman, director of the Group, is the senior management staff contact for Advisory Council affairs; Dr. Robert Loftness, director of EPRI's Washington Office, serves as secretary to the Council; and, Dr. Jay Kopelman, Mr. Rudman's staff assistant, coordinates and supports the activities of the Council's various sub-committees and issue groups.