



NRC NEWS

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OPENING REMARKS OF NRC CHAIRMAN GREGORY B. JACZKO AT THE BRIEFING ON GROUNDWATER TASK FORCE

Good morning. The Commission meets today to receive a briefing on the Groundwater Task Force. For a number of years now, the agency has dedicated increased attention to this issue. Our actions – as well as those of our licensees – have been subjected to a high level of scrutiny by the members of the public, elected officials, and other stakeholders. One sign of the high level of public interest in this issue is that the most widely viewed archived webcast in the past year on the NRC's website was the April 20, 2010, Groundwater Contamination Workshop, with over 2,000 viewers.

While the agency has concluded that the leaks to this point have not endangered public health and safety, we have tried to be proactive in identifying potential ways we can improve our efforts in this area. In 2006, the NRC created a special task force to conduct a lessons-learned review of leaks at several power plants. That review led to more than two dozen recommendations, many of which have been incorporated into agency guidance. In 2009, the NRC followed up these efforts by establishing the independent staff Groundwater task force to review the adequacy of the agency's oversight in this area. During today's meeting, the Commission will be looking at the NRC's senior management review of Task Force's work and recommendations, as well as hearing from a broad range of stakeholders on this issue. I would like to thank the staff for their thorough look at this issue.

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