



NRC NEWS

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OPENING REMARKS OF NRC CHAIRMAN GREGORY B. JACZKO AT THE BRIEFING ON THE NRC'S APPROACH TO SEVERE ACCIDENTS

Good morning. The Commission meets today to receive an overview of the agency's approach to severe accidents and to discuss the potential uses for Level 3 probabilistic risk assessments (PRA).

Since the 1995 PRA Policy Statement, the Commission has endorsed and encouraged the use of PRAs and other risk tools to strengthen our regulatory framework. Today, they are widely used by the NRC in a number of important safety areas, including fire protection and new reactor design reviews. Although not all of our activities necessarily lend themselves to this type of risk analysis, it is no exaggeration to say that the NRC today is a leader in the state-of-the-art use of PRA technology.

I want to thank the staff for developing a paper that lays out several options on how we can build on this strong foundation and move forward with the future use of Level 3 PRAs. There is no question that the state-of-the-art has improved significantly over the last two decades, and that there are new issues that perhaps should be examined through the completion of Level 3 PRAs. As the staff notes in their paper, those include issues raised by the Fukushima accident, specifically the challenges posed by multi-unit events and the risks of radiological releases from spent fuel pools.

It is a credit to everyone who has worked on these issues – including notably my colleague Commissioner Apostolakis – that we are today considering the development a full-scope Level 3 PRA.

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