include the Denver, Kansas City, Portland, Oregon, and St. Paul District Offices and the Salt Lake City and St. Louis Suboffices on the current list of direct mail sites for filing Form N–400, Application for Naturalization. Applicants residing within these districts and suboffices will mail their Form N–400 directly to the designated INS service center for processing. This expansion is intended to improve INS service to the public by reducing processing times for Form N–400, limiting in-person visits to local offices, and improving the quality of case status information provided to the public.

DATES: This notice is effective January 7, 1998 or January 30, 1998, whichever is later.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Susan Arroyo, Adjudications Officer, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Office of Naturalization Operations, 801 I Street, NW., Room 935E, Washington, DC 20536, telephone, (202) 514–8247.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under the INS Direct Mail Program, certain applicants and petitioners for immigration benefits mail their applications or petitions directly to an INS service center for processing instead of submitting them to a local INS office. The purposes and strategy of the Direct Mail Program has been discussed in detail in previous rulemaking notices (see, 59 FR 33903 and 59 FR 33985).

The Service is continuing expansion of the Direct Mail Program as applied to Form N–400, by adding the Denver, Kansas City, Portland, Oregon, and St. Paul District Offices, and the Salt Lake City and St. Louis Suboffices, as Direct Mail sites.

Where to File

Effective [Insert date of publication in the **Federal Register**, or January 30, 1998, whichever is later] applicants for naturalization residing within the jurisdiction of the Denver, Kansas, Portland, Oregon, and the St. Paul District Offices and the Salt Lake City and St. Louis Suboffices must mail the Form N–400, Application for Naturalization directly to the following address: USINS Nebraska Service Center, Attention: N–400 Unit, P.O. Box 87400, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508–7400.

Transition

During the first 60 days following the effective date of this notice, the Denver, Kansas City, Portland, Oregon, and St. Paul District Offices and the Salt Lake City and St. Louis Suboffices will forward in a timely fashion to the Nebraska Service Center any Form N–400, Application for Naturalization, which has been inadvertently filed with the respective district or suboffice. Applicants will be provided a notice at the time of filing at the district or suboffice advising them that their application is being forwarded to the service center for initial processing. The applicant will receive written notification from their respective district or suboffice of the date, place, and time of their interview for naturalization. When applications are forwarded from the district or suboffices, they will be receipted and filed when they arrive at the service center.

After the 60-day transition period, applicants attempting to file Form N–400, Application for Naturalization, at the offices listed above will be directed to mail their application directly to the appropriate service center for processing.

Dated: December 31, 1997.

Doris Meissner,

Commissioner, Immigration and Naturalization Service.

[FR Doc. 98–366 Filed 1–6–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4410–10–M

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

[Notice 98–001]

NASA Advisory Council, Life and Microgravity Sciences and Applications Advisory Committee; Meeting

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Pub. L. 92–463, as amended, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration announces a meeting of the NASA Advisory Council, Life and Microgravity Sciences and Applications Advisory Committee.

DATES: February 5, 1998, 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; and February 6, 1998, 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

ADDRESSES: NASA Headquarters, Room MIC 6, 300 E Street, SW, Washington, DC 20546.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Robert C. Rhome, Code UG, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Washington, DC 20546, 202/358–1490.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The meeting will be open to the public up to the seating capacity of the room. The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

—Subcommittee Summary Reports
—Office of Life and Microgravity Sciences and Applications (OLMSA) Overview
—Neurolab Mission Science Overview
—Draft Policy on Astronaut Health and Biomedical Research Roles and Responsibilities
—Stewardship as an Accounting Standard
—Grants End-to-End Study
—International Space Station as a Commercial Operation
—Committee Annual OLMSA Program Review
—Discussion of Committee Findings and Recommendations

It is imperative that the meeting be held on these dates to accommodate the scheduling priorities of the key participants. Visitors will be requested to sign a visitor's register.

Dated: December 22, 1997.

Alan M. Ladwig,

Advisory Committee Management Officer, National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

[FR Doc. 98–368 Filed 1–6–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7510–01–M

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation (Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station); Issuance of Final Director's Decision Under 10 CFR 2.206

[Docket No. 50–271]

Notice is hereby given that the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR), has taken action with regard to a Petition dated December 6, 1996, submitted by Mr. Jonathan M. Block, on behalf of the Citizens Awareness Network, Inc. (CAN). The Petition requested evaluation of certain Memoranda included with the Petition related to the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station (Vermont Yankee) operated by the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation (Licensee) to see if enforcement action is warranted.

The first document enclosed with the Petition is a CAN Memorandum dated December 5, 1996, that reviews information presented by the Licensee at an enforcement conference held on July 23, 1996, involving the minimum-flow valves in the Vermont Yankee residual heat removal (RHR) system. The second document included with the Petition is a CAN Memorandum dated December 6, 1996, that contains a

review of certain licensee event reports (LERs) submitted by the Licensee in the latter part of 1996. On the basis of these documents, CAN requests that the NRC determine whether enforcement action is warranted pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206.

On October 8, 1997, a Partial Director's Decision was issued that responded to the first Memorandum concerning the RHR system and all but three of the LERs listed in the second Memorandum. This Final Director's Decisionaddresses the NRC staff's conclusions regarding the three remaining LERs that were still being evaluated at the time the Partial Director's Decision was issued.

On November 7, 1997, CAN submitted a letter to the Director of NRR commenting on the Partial Director's Decision. CAN raised a concern that the Partial Director's Decision did not adequately address concerns raised in its Petition of December 6, 1996. In a response from the NRC staff dated November 28, 1997, CAN was informed that its letter provided no new or additional information that would warrant a review of the Partial Director's Decision. In its letter of November 7, 1997, CAN also raised a concern asserting ''systematic mismanagement'' at the Vermont Yankee facility and requested certain NRC actions. The Petitioner was informed that this concern would be treated as a supplement to the original Petition and is also addressed in this Final Director's Decision.

The Director of NRR has granted the Petition in that the NRC staff has evaluated all of the issues and LERs raised in the two Memoranda to see if enforcement action is warranted on the basis of the information contained therein. The evaluation concludes that no further enforcement action is warranted. The Director has denied the Petitioner's requests set out in the November 7, 1997 letter that the NRC conduct additional reviews of safety systems at the Vermont Yankee facility. The reasons for the NRC staff's conclusions are provided in the ''Director's Decision Pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206'' (DD–97–26), the complete text of which follows this notice and is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT.

A copy of the Decision will be filed with the Secretary of the Commission for the Commission's review in accordance with 10 CFR 2.206(c) of the Commission's regulations. As provided for by this regulation, the Decision will constitute the final action of the Commission 25 days after the date of issuance, unless the Commission, on its own motion, institutes a review of the decision in that time.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 29th day of December 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Samuel J. Collins,

Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

Final Director's Decision Pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206

[DD–97–26]

I. Introduction

On December 6, 1996, Mr. Jonathan M. Block submitted a Petition on behalf of the Citizens Awareness Network, Inc. (CAN or Petitioner), and included two Memoranda from CAN. The first Memorandum, dated December 5, 1996, reviews information presented by the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation (Licensee) at a predecisional enforcement conference held on July 23, 1996, involving the minimum-flow valves in the residual heat removal (RHR) system at the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station (Vermont Yankee facility). The second Memorandum, dated December 6, 1996, contains a review of certain licensee event reports (LERs) submitted by the Licensee in the latter part of 1996. The Petitioner requests that the NRC evaluate these documents, pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206, to determine if enforcement action is warranted on the basis of information contained therein.

On February 12, 1997, the NRC informed the Petitioner in an acknowledgement letter that the Petition had been referred to the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) for the preparation of a Director's Decision and that action would be taken within a reasonable time regarding the specific concerns raised in the Petition. On October 8, 1997, the NRC issued a Partial Director's Decision that responded to the first Memorandum concerning the RHR system and all but three of the LERs listed in the second Memorandum. This Final Director's Decision addresses the NRC staff's conclusions regarding the three remaining LERs that were still being evaluated at the time the Partial Director's Decision was issued.

On November 7, 1997, CAN submitted a letter to the Director of NRR commenting on the Partial Director's Decision. CAN raised a concern that the Partial Director's Decision did not adequately address concerns raised in its Petition of December 6, 1996. In a response from the NRC staff dated November 28, 1997, CAN was informed that its letter provided no new or additional information that would warrant a review of the Partial Director's Decision. In its November 7, 1997 letter, CAN also raised a concern about asserted ''systematic mismanagement'' at the Vermont Yankee facility and requested certain NRC actions. The Petitioner was informed that this specific concern would be treated as a supplement to the original Petition and is addressed in this Final Director's Decision.

II. Discussion

The NRC staff's evaluation of the three remaining LERs and the Petitioner's supplemental request for action follows.

A. Licensee Event Reports

A CAN Memorandum dated December 6, 1996, included with the Petition contains a review of several LERs submitted by the Licensee in the latter part of 1996. On the basis of its analysis of the LERs, CAN reaches certain conclusions regarding Licensee performance and actions that it believes should be taken. The Partial Director's Decision evaluated LERs 96–13, 96–14, 96–19, 96–20, 96–21, 96–22, and 96–25 and provided a response to CAN's overall conclusions regarding Licensee performance and requested actions. LERs 96–15, 96–18, and 96–23 were still open at the time the Partial Director's Decision was issued. The staff has completed its evaluation of these three LERs and its conclusions are presented below.

1. *LER 96–15:* ''Original B31.1 ANSI Code Section That Required Overpressurization Relief for Isolated Piping Sections Was Not Considered During [the] Original Design''

Certain piping sections which would be isolated after a loss-of-coolant accident (LOCA) were found to lack overpressure protection, contrary to code requirements. The water in this piping could expand because of the high temperatures accompanying a LOCA and exceed the design pressure rating of the piping. CAN asserts that the Licensee failed to take advantage of earlier opportunities to identify this design error when making modifications to the six systems discussed in the LER. CAN is correct in that the LER documented the first discovery of this problem, although modifications had been made to the affected systems earlier. This potential

overpressurization problem has been identified at other plants, as evidenced by the issuance of NRC Information Notice 96–49 on August 20, 1996, and NRC Generic Letter (GL) 96–06 on September 30, 1996. The Licensee was aware of events in this area and identified this issue at its site before the generic communications previously referred to were issued. The Licensee's corrective actions included a design change that provided the required overpressure protection for the affected lines. The change was completed in the 1996 refueling outage conducted during the period of September 6, 1996 to October 30, 1996.

Because the Licensee identified the design deficiency described in this LER by other than routine quality assurance or surveillance activities and has implemented appropriate corrective actions to resolve the discrepancy, this ''old design issue'' was not cited in accordance with NRC Enforcement Policy, Section VII.B.3.[1] The LER was closed in Inspection Report 50–271/97–11.

2. *LER 96–18:* ''Inadequate Installation and Inspection of Fire Protection Wrap Results in Plant Operation Outside of Its Design Basis; A Single Fire Would Impact Multiple Trains of Safety-Related Equipment''

CAN asserts that this deficiency had significant adverse safety implications. The reported deficiency consisted of a small gap in the fire barrier installed on a cable tray support. The cable tray contained wiring to support operation of the emergency core cooling system (ECCS). The NRC staff does not consider CAN's claim that a fire could have rendered both divisions of the ECCS inoperable credible. The Licensee's evaluation found that existing fire protection analyses were very conservative and that with the combustible loading and fire detection and suppression equipment in the area, no credible fire threat could challenge the functionality of the ''as found'' wrapped cable. The staff agrees with the Licensee's analysis as documented in the LER and has found that the Licensee acted appropriately to correct the fire barrier deficiency and to prevent similar problems in the future.

The NRC staff found that the deficiency described in this LER was a violation of NRC requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix R, Section III.G. However, in accordance with the provisions of NRC Enforcement Policy, Section VII.B.4, no notice of violation was issued in this case because the deficiency: (1) Was identified by the Licensee as part of the corrective actions for a previous issue related to Appendix R, (2) had the same root cause as the previous issue, (3) did not substantially change the safety significance or the character of the regulatory concern arising out of the initial action, and (4) the deficiency was corrected within a reasonable time following identification. The LER was closed in Inspection Report 50–271/97–80.

3. *LER 96–23:* ''Inadequate Surveillance Procedure Results in Failure To Meet Technical Specification Requirements for Radiation Monitor Functional Testing''

The reactor building and refueling floor radiation monitor test procedure did not verify the high alarm contact actuation as required by the Vermont Yankee Technical Specifications. The NRC staff agrees with CAN that this event presented no significant risk to public health and safety. Considering that the monitors were verified to be fully functional and were in the condition required by plant Technical Specifications, this specific event appears to have been limited to an inadequate testing methodology. The Licensee's corrective actions included revising the deficient surveillance test procedure to properly test the high alarm output contacts.

Because the deficiency identified in this LER was of minor safety significance and was identified and corrected by the Licensee, it was treated as a non-cited violation in accordance with NRC Enforcement Policy, Section VII.B.1. The LER was closed in Inspection Report 50–271/97–08.

B. Supplemental Request for Action

On November 7, 1997, CAN submitted a letter which raised a concern about asserted ''systematic mismanagement'' at the Vermont Yankee facility and requested that three actions be taken. In its response to the Petitioner, the NRC staff indicated that this concern would be considered as a supplement to the Petition.

The requested actions, along with the NRC staff's evaluation, are discussed below.

1. ''An NRC team in conjunction with an outside contractor conduct a review of a second system, the ventilation system.''

From May 5 through June 13, 1997, the NRC staff performed a detailed design inspection of the low-pressure coolant injection and RHR service water systems at the Vermont Yankee facility. The inspection team consisted of a team leader from the NRC and five contractor engineers from Stone & Webster Engineering Corporation. The systems were chosen on the basis of their importance in mitigating design-basis accidents at Vermont Yankee. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the capability of the selected systems to perform the safety functions required by the design bases and the consistency of the as-built configuration and system operations with the Final Safety Analysis Report (FSAR). Overall, the inspection team concluded that the two systems were capable of performing their intended safety functions. However, the team identified some issues that indicated potential programmatic concerns extending beyond the two systems that were inspected. Specifically, the team identified the following issues which indicated potential programmatic concerns: (1) Several examples which indicated the Licensee's correction of licensing documentation was not timely; (2) when rendering equipment inoperable for surveillance testing, the Licensee's practice concerning entry into the limiting condition of operation (LCO) was not consistent with the guidance provided in GL 91–18, ''Resolution of Degraded and Nonconforming Conditions;'' (3) deviations from the licensing commitments made in response to GL 89–13, ''Service Water System Problems Affecting Safety-Related Equipment;'' (4) weaknesses in the development and control of calculations, and the review and approval process for calculations; and (5) weaknesses concerning the Licensee's translation of design criteria and design bases into detailed operating instructions. The results of this inspection were documented in Inspection Report 50–271/97–201.

By letter dated October 27, 1997, the Licensee provided a schedule and detailed the plans to complete the corrective actions required to resolve the broader programmatic issues listed in the inspection report. In its letter, the Licensee listed several initiatives it has undertaken to improve its performance. These initiatives include: (1) A re-engineering of the corrective action program, (2) a large scale program to develop Design Basis Documents for the 23 most risk significant systems, (3) initiation of a Design Basis Validation Program, (4) conversion of the plant's Technical Specifications to the Standard Technical Specification format, (5) a large scale instrument setpoint calculation and verification program, (6) a large scale effort to re-engineer the

[1] General Statement of Policy and Procedures for NRC Enforcement Actions, NUREG–1600 (Enforcement Policy).

configuration management program, and (7) creation of a System Engineering Department.

The NRC staff has concluded that the Licensee's proposed actions and schedule are acceptable and that the facility may be operated while the Licensee works to resolve these issues. The staff will continue to follow the Licensee's progress to improve the facility's design-basis documentation and implement the initiatives outlined in its October 27, 1997 letter through the normal inspection process. A detailed design inspection by the NRC staff of an additional safety system is not warranted at this time.

2. ''NRC with an outside contractor and VY [Vermont Yankee] conduct a review of all backup safety systems to assure adequacy of these systems in order to protect worker and public health and safety.''

As stated in the reply to Item 1 above, the NRC staff has conducted a detailed design inspection of two selected systems at the Vermont Yankee facility. The inspection team found the two systems capable of performing their intended design functions. As discussed in Item 1 above, the inspection report also documented several issues of programmatic concern. The NRC staff has determined that the Licensee's response to these programmatic concerns is acceptable and implementation of the Licensee's actions will be assessed during followup inspections. Overall, the staff finds that the detailed design inspection and the followup inspection activities provide adequate assurance of public health and safety and that a design review inspection of additional safety systems is not warranted at this time.

3. ''Given the lack of thoroughness by the licensee and significant flaws in the FSAR and design basis evaluation, CAN questions Region I staff's competence to effectively oversee reactors under its authority. We therefore request that the archive of NRC's oversight failures at VY [Vermont Yankee] be added to the Inspector General's investigation of complicity and systematic failure to enforce NRC regulations by NRC staff in Region I and Project Directorates.''

With regard to this request, CAN's letter has been forwarded to the Office of the Inspector General.

III. Conclusion

The NRC staff has reviewed the information submitted by the Petitioner. The Petitioner's request is granted in part in that the NRC staff has evaluated all of the issues raised in the two Memoranda and the supplemental letter provided by the Petitioner to see if enforcement action is warranted on the basis of the information contained therein. In the Partial and the Final Director's Decision, the NRC staff has discussed each Memorandum and the supplemental letter and described any related enforcement action that was taken. The Petitioner's supplemental request that the NRC, in conjunction with an outside contractor, conduct additional review of safety systems at the Vermont Yankee facility is denied. With respect to the supplemental request for an investigation of NRC oversight of the Vermont Yankee facility, the Petitioner's supplemental letter was forwarded to the Office of the Inspector General.

As provided in 10 CFR 2.206(c), a copy of this Decision will be filed with the Secretary of the Commission for the Commission's review. This Decision will constitute the final action of the Commission 25 days after issuance, unless the Commission, on its own motion, institutes review of the Decision in that time.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 29th day of December 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Samuel J. Collins,

Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 98–371 Filed 1–6–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Degradation of Steam Generator Internals; Issue

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Notice of issuance.

SUMMARY: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has issued Generic Letter (GL) 97–06 to all holders of operating licenses for pressurized-water reactors, except those who have permanently ceased operations and have certified that fuel has been permanently removed from the reactor vessel, to (1) again alert addressees to the previously communicated findings of damage to steam generator internals, namely, tube support plates and tube bundle wrappers, at foreign PWR facilities; (2) alert addressees to recent findings of damage to steam generator tube support plates at a U.S. PWR facility; (3) emphasize to addressees the importance of performing comprehensive examinations of steam generator internals to ensure steam generator tube structural integrity is maintained in accordance with the requirements of Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 50; and (4) require all addressees to submit information that will enable the NRC staff to verify whether addressees' steam generator internals comply with and conform to the current licensing bases for their respective facilities. This generic letter only requests information from the addressees under the provisions of Section 182a of the Atomic Energy Act, as amended, and 10 CFR 50.54(f).

The generic letter is available in the NRC Public Document Room under accession number 9712180168.

DATES: The generic letter was issued on December 30, 1997.

ADDRESSEES: Not applicable.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephanie M. Coffin, at (301) 415–2778.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This generic letter does not constitute a backfit as defined in 10 CFR 50.109(a)(1) since it does not impose modifications of or additions to structures, systems or components or to design or operation of an addressee's facility. It also does not impose an interpretation of the Commission's rules that is either new or different from a previous staff position. The staff, therefore, has not performed a backfit analysis.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 30th day of December 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

David B. Matthews,

Acting Director, Division of Reactor Program Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 98–372 Filed 1–6–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meeting

AGENCY HOLDING THE MEETING: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

DATE: Weeks of January 5, 12, 19, and 26, 1998.

PLACE: Commissioners' Conference Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

STATUS: Public and Closed.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Week of January 5

There are no meetings the week of January 5.

Week of January 12—Tentative

Thursday, January 15

9:00 a.m.

Affirmation Session (Public Meeting) (if needed)