FEMA'S PERSPECTIVE ON-RADIOLOGICAL TRANSPORTATION ACCIDENTS

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ABSTRACT

On behalf of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), I would like to thank the Department of Energy (DOE) for inviting FEMA to participate in this Workshop. FEMA shares a commitment with the DOE to maintain a dialogue between the Federal agencies and State, Tribal and local governments concerning the transportation of radioactive materials.

FEMA's middle name, "Emergency Management," gives two clues to FEMA's perspective on radiological transportation accidents, as well as for other types of emergencies. First, FEMA's mission is to work with State, Tribal and local governments, the private sector and other Federal agencies to develop and enhance integrated emergency planning, preparedness and response for all types of emergencies, including radiological transportation accidents. Second, as FEMA's name is not the "Federal Regulatory Management Agency" or some equivalent, the Agency does not regulate the transportation of radioactive materials since participation in FEMA's programs is voluntary. Regulation of the transportation of radioactive materials is the joint responsibility of the Department of Transportation and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

INTRODUCTION

FEMA provides various forms of assistance to State, Tribal and local governments: financial aid, guidance, training and technical assistance. This assistance is provided within an integrateddmanagement framework for the development and enhancement of core response functions: direction and control, communications, alerting the public, emergency public information, emergency worker protection, accident assessment, protective action decision making, protective action implementation, medical services and resource management.

The provision of Federal guidance, training and technical assistance to State, Tribal and local governments is coordinated by FEMA with the following 9 Federal agencies: Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, Health and Human Services, Department of Interior, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Department of Transportation and the United States Department of Agriculture. Support is also provided to FEMA for the provision of radiological emergency planning and preparedness assistance for transportation accidents involving radioactive materials by Sandia National Laboratories, Southern States Energy Board and the Western Interstate Energy Board.

Financial assistance is provided by FEMA to State, Tribal and local governments through Comprehensive Cooperative Agreements (CCA). The FY 89 CCA budget is approximately $85 million. These funds are used by State, Tribal and local government infrastructure for all types of disasters and emergencies. This financial assistance enables State, Tribal and local governments to develop and maintain trained professional and volunteer staff, emergency response plans and procedures, communications systems, emergency operating centers and radiological instrumentation.

While CCA funding is provided for the primary purpose of Civil Defense planning and preparedness, CCA resources are of considerable value to radiological preparedness for transportation accidents for two reasons. First, integrated emergency management capabilities and resources can be used for responding to these accidents. Second, CCA funds can be used for emergency planning, preparedness and response for transportation accident preparedness as long as they are used "in a manner that is consistent with, contributes to, and does not detract from attackrelated civil defense preparedness.

"Federal guidance has been developed by FEMA with the support of other Federal agencies and provided to State, Tribal and local governments. Guidance encompassing transportation accidents involving radioactive materials has been developed within both an integrated framework for all types of emergencies and specifically for radioactive material transportation accidents. The integrated guidance is contained in a document known as "CPG 18A", Guide for the Review of State and Local Emergency Operations Plans. The radiological specific guidance for transportation accidents involving radioactive materials is referred to as "FEMAREP5", Guidance for Developing State and Local Radiological Emergency Response Plans and Preparedness for Transportation Accidents. With such a long title, you now know why we refer to this document with the short designator of "FEMAREP5." This document was published in 1983 as an interimuse document for State and local governments. A draft revision of FEMAREP5 was published in August of 1988 with the inclusion of guidance for Tribal governments, as well as other significant changes. The final edition of FEMAREP5 is expected to be ready for publication in May of 1989 and will incorporate comments received on the draft revision.

An extensive training program, consisting of both resident courses at FEMA's National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, Maryland and field courses, is available to State, Tribal and local government officials. These courses have been developed with the support of other Federal agencies. FEMA does not offer a course that deals only with radiological transportation accidents. However, such accidents are covered through the transportation modules in generic radiological and hazardous materials courses. Several of the courses employ the "trainthetrainer" concept whereby trained instructors can replicate the teaching of radiological series courses to hundreds, and even thousands of State, Tribal and local government officials.

Both the resident and field courses cover the following

radiological preparedness and response capabilities: radiological program management; basic response for first responders; State response teams; emergency planning; accident assessment; radiological monitoring; medical response (ambulance and hospital protocols), exercise preparation and evaluation and Federal response planning and preparedness. CCA funding provides extensive support to State and local government training programs.

CONCLUSION

Finally, FEMA provides coordinated Federal technical assistance to State, Tribal and local governments. FEMA's priority for providing technical assistance is currently given in FEMA's Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) program to planning preparedness for accidents at commercial nuclear power plants. To the extent that resources permit, technical assistance is available to State, Tribal and local governments for radiological transportation emergency preparedness through FEMA's 10 Regional Offices for the following activities: provision and interpretation of Federal guidance; review and evaluation of emergency response plans, preparedness and development, conducting and evaluation of exercises and Federal response.

In addition to the provision of Federal guidance, training opportunities and technical assistance to State, Tribal and local governments, FEMA has worked closely with 11 other Federal agencies to develop and publish the Federal Radiological Emergency Response Plan or "FRERP" as it is commonly known. This Federal Plan provides the framework for the coordinated Federal response to all types of peacetime radiological emergencies, including transportation accidents involving radioactive materials. Periodic FRERP Workshops throughout the country, provide opportunities to State, Tribal and local government officials to learn about Federal response preparedness. Opportunities are, also, provided to examine and discuss potential State, Tribal and local government, private sector and Federal responsedinterfaces.In setting forth FEMA's perspective on radiological transportation accidents, I have emphasized FEMA's integrated management approach for all types of emergencies. This approach has been adopted by FEMA as well as State and local governments because it achieves two critical and related objectives: maximum protection of public health and safety and cost effectiveness. As emphasized in FEMAREP5, it is critical that emergency planning and preparedness for transportation accidents involving radioactive materials be integrated with emergency preparedness for the full spectrum of hazardous materials accidents (including both facility and transportationbased accidents), radiological emergency preparedness and other types of natural and manmade emergencies.

Because of the priority given by FEMA to radiological emergency planning and preparedness since the Three Mile Island accident in 1979, the REP program has been a catalyst for enhancing the capabilities of State, Tribal and local governments to respond to radiological emergencies, but to any type of natural or manmade emergency. We already have evidence of spinoffs from radiological emergency preparedness to allhazards preparedness in the use of radiological plans for chemical facility accidents in Taft, Louisiana, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania and natural disasters.

While much progress has been made in the development and enhancement ofradiological preparedness for transportation accidents throughout our country, new challenges await our response. Two such challenges include the upcoming DOE shipments to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad, New Mexico and shipments in the 1990s of spent fuel from commercial nuclear power plants throughout the country.

On the basis of the integrated emergency management infrastructure and working partnership that has been established among Federal, State. Tribal and local governments and with the private sector including volunteer organizations, FEMA believes that we can move into the future with the confidence that the health and safety of American citizens will be adequately protected in the event of serious transportation accident involving radioactive materials.