**Approval for Estimated Conference Spending in
Excess of $500,000 for a Single Conference per
Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-17-08,
"Amending OMB Memorandum M-12-12, Promoting
Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations"**

As Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I hereby approve estimated spending exceeding $500,000 for the 2018 Regulatory Information Conference (RIC). The NRC will hold the next annual RIC in March 2018.

For the reasons detailed below, I have determined that exceptional circumstances exist and that spending in excess of $500,000 on hosting the 2018 RIC is the most cost-effective option to achieve a compelling purpose.

The NRC's mission is to license and regulate the Nation's civilian use of byproduct, source, and special nuclear materials to ensure adequate protection of public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and protect the environment. The RIC supports this mission, as well as the NRC's commitment to conduct its work openly and transparently, by providing a unique forum that brings together diverse groups of stakeholders to inform them of significant and timely policy decisions and regulatory oversight activities.

The RIC is highly valued by both the agency and external stakeholders for its technical and educational content. In addition, the RIC offers an environment in which the NRC staff and stakeholders share relevant information; exchange views and perspectives; and discuss challenging safety, security, and policy issues before the agency. As we continue to learn from recent events, this forum is crucial to the mission of the agency.

Since its inception in 1987, the RIC has grown to become one of the premier nuclear conferences of its kind in the world. It is widely attended, bringing together approximately 3,000 participants representing more than 32 countries. Participants include members of the public; Federal, State, and local government officials; nuclear safety regulators from other nations; experts from the national laboratories; advocacy groups; media representatives; licensees; vendors; and other interested stakeholders. The technical program features nuclear experts from across the agency, as well as external speakers from industry, academia, public interest groups, and the international community. This educational conference also provides an exceptional opportunity for attendees to hear firsthand the views of each member of the Commission related to emerging regulatory issues and policy matters affecting the agency.

The RIC gives the NRC the opportunity to cultivate international relationships, influence nuclear safety on a global scale, and foster the exchange of best practices in the nuclear arena. The face-to-face interaction with members of industry, private interest groups, and other stakeholders is vital and provides wide-ranging opportunities to network, share ideas, raise issues or concerns, search for solutions, and establish relationships with colleagues from around the world.

Successfully executing a large conference with the magnitude and complexity of the RIC requires extensive coordination and effective management of resources. The Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) and the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES) cosponsor the RIC. Both NRR and RES are dedicated to the NRC's commitment to responsible fiscal stewardship. The NRC is continually identifying ways to reduce conference costs. NRR, as the

lead office, diligently scrutinizes and monitors every aspect of the planning, logistics, and implementation of the RIC to ensure that the agency spends all funds in the most cost-effective, efficient manner.

Two contracts assist in the execution of the RIC: (1) the planning and logistical support contract (a small business contractor under the Small Business Administration's 8(a) program) and (2) the conference facility contract. These contracts cover Web development, registration, audiovisual support, onsite logistics, and conference facility meeting space. The costs associated with these two contracts are approximately $737,000.

The NRC maximizes in-house resources from the Office of Administration, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, and the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer to facilitate agencywide coordination of technical program content and development, Web support, design and production of both electronic and hard-copy conference materials, preregistration activities, and onsite staffing. The RIC takes advantage of existing NRC enterprise-wide contracts for support of the RIC registration system security, Web hosting, broadcast coordination and testing, onsite physical security, transcription services, reasonable accommodations, and shipping and delivery activities. The costs associated with these services are approximately $140,000.

The conference facility is located close to a Metrorail station. The proximity of both NRC Headquarters and public transportation greatly reduces travel and per diem costs for most Federal conference attendees, as well as the travel costs for planners during conference preparation. The benefits of locating the conference near the NRC and on the Metrorail are threefold: (1) NRC staff members are able to attend only the conference portions that are valuable to them and to return to their workplaces for the remainder of each day; (2) the NRC can use its own headquarters facility for some of the needed additional meeting spaces at no additional cost; and (3) the NRC staff and international counterparts can conduct nonconference business that might otherwise require international travel, further reducing travel costs for the NRC.

The compelling purpose achieved by the RIC constitutes exceptional circumstances. On this basis, I am confident that the costs associated with executing the 2018 RIC are valid and prudent. Therefore, in accordance with OMB Memorandum M-17-08, I hereby approve expenses exceeding $500,000 on a single conference for the 2018 RIC.

          /RA/   9/6/2017
_____   _____
Kristine L. Svinicki, Chairman   Date