

**Approval for Estimated Conference Spending in Excess of \$500,000 for a Single
Conference in Accordance with 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 potential expenditure in excess of \$500,000 for the 2023 Regulatory Information Conference (RIC). The NRC is planning to hold the next annual RIC in March 2023.

For the reasons detailed below, I have determined that exceptional circumstances exist and that spending more than \$500,000 on hosting the 2023 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. In addition, the RIC supports one of the strategic goals in NUREG-1614, Vol. 8, “Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2022–2026” (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML22067A170), which is to inspire stakeholder confidence in the NRC. The RIC demonstrates NRC’s commitment to conduct work openly and transparently. It provides a unique forum that brings together diverse groups of stakeholders to inform them of significant and timely policy decisions and regulatory oversight activities, as well as ways that the NRC is transforming to continue to become a more modern, risk-informed regulator.

Since its inception in 1987, the RIC has become one of the premier nuclear conferences in the world. It is widely attended, and through the use of modern technology, the RIC typically brings together over 3,000 attendees representing approximately 40 countries. RIC attendees consist of 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. Similar to the 2021 RIC, the NRC planned for the 2022 RIC to be conducted as a hybrid event; however, due to the ongoing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the 2022 RIC was transitioned to being fully virtual. The 2022 virtual RIC consisted of nearly 3,500 attendees representing 45 countries.

Both the agency and external stakeholders highly value the RIC for its technical and educational content. This conference also provides a unique opportunity for attendees to hear firsthand the views of each member of the Commission on emerging regulatory issues and policy matters affecting the agency. In addition, the RIC offers an environment for influencing nuclear safety on a global scale, building new partnerships, and strengthening connections, both domestically and internationally. The NRC staff and stakeholders use the RIC to share relevant information, exchange views and perspectives, discuss challenging policy issues facing the agency, and promote safety and security best practices in the nuclear arena. As the agency continues to learn from recent events in the nuclear community, this forum is crucial to its mission.

Successfully executing such a large and complex conference requires extensive coordination and the effective management of resources. The Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) and the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research co-sponsor the RIC. Both offices are dedicated to the NRC’s commitment to responsible fiscal stewardship. The NRC is continually identifying

Enclosure

ways to reduce conference costs. As the lead office, NRR diligently scrutinizes and monitors the planning, logistics, and implementation of the RIC to ensure that the agency spends appropriate funds in the most cost-effective, efficient manner.

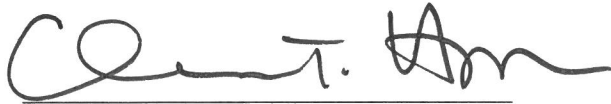
The objectives and work requirements of the RIC cannot be successfully accomplished exclusively under any other existing NRC contracts. Therefore, NRR leverages two contracts to assist in executing the RIC: (1) planning and logistical support covering web development, registration, audiovisual support, and onsite logistics, and (2) meeting space. The planning and logistical support contract is currently in place through 2025, and NRR is working with the Office of Administration, Division of Acquisition Management, to secure a meeting space contract to support the 2023 hybrid RIC. Accounting for the continuation into a second year of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant need to transition from a hybrid to a virtual RIC this year, the total amount expended for the 2022 virtual RIC was approximately \$675,000.00.

In addition to these two contracts, when possible, the NRC uses existing contracts in support offices for RIC assistance and services including registration system security, web hosting, and web streaming (Office of the Chief Information Officer); captioning, videography, photography, technical editing support, onsite physical security, and shipping and delivery activities (Office of Administration); transcription services (Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel); reasonable accommodations (Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer); and limited English proficiency services (Office of Small Business and Civil Rights). The total costs for these services to support the 2022 virtual RIC were approximately \$306,887.00.

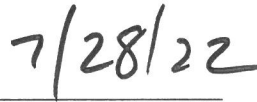
Currently, the NRC is planning for the 35th annual RIC to be a hybrid event, consisting of a program that supports in-person attendance as well as a virtual component allowing remote participation. However, the agency continues to proactively monitor guidance from the Office of Management and Budget, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, State of Maryland, Montgomery County, and other organizations and will adjust the program format where necessary. In addition, the staff continues to proactively seek best practices from other conferences taking place around the world and to consult with NRC stakeholders and with the planning and logistical support contractor to identify ways to reduce contract risk for both the NRC and the contractor. Given this uncertainty, the NRC may need to adjust the program format, and this may result in unplanned costs.

The NRC remains committed to using innovative methods, including new and emerging technologies, to ensure that the agency continues to provide attendees with a valuable opportunity for engagement and participation, as well as a rewarding conference experience. A preliminary cost estimate for an in-person RIC with virtual participation capability is \$1.5 million for planning, logistics, audiovisual support, and information technology support.

I have determined that exceptional circumstances exist and that spending more than \$500,000 on hosting the 2023 RIC is the most cost-effective option to achieve a compelling purpose. Therefore, in accordance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-17-08, "Amending OMB Memorandum M-12-12, Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations," dated November 25, 2016, I hereby approve NRC expenditures exceeding \$500,000 for a single conference for the 2023 RIC.



Christopher T. Hanson, Chairman



Date