



NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION
PREVENTION PROJECT

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NRC Abandons Plan to Quash Public Disclosure of Bomb-Grade Nuclear Exports; NPPPP Praises Quick Response, Warns of Excessive Secrecy

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is abandoning its own staff’s proposal to withhold public disclosure of information regarding proposed and approved nuclear exports, including of nuclear weapons-usable material, according to a reply from the Commission to a complaint by the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Project (NPPPP) at the University of Texas at Austin.

The NPPPP’s coordinator, Alan J. Kuperman, had urged the Commission, in an [email](#) dated October 11, 2016, to reject an [NRC staff proposal](#) that nuclear export applicants be encouraged to withhold public disclosure of such information and that “If an applicant does not withhold this type of information the NRC will withhold it on the issued license.”

Kuperman’s protest noted that more than a decade ago the NRC had briefly instituted such a reduction of public disclosure, but had reversed itself in an [August 2006 letter from NRC Chairman Dale Klein](#), responding to an earlier request from Kuperman and the late Paul Leventhal of the Nuclear Control Institute.

In the [Commission’s new letter dated November 30, 2016](#), the Director of the NRC’s Office of International Programs, Nader L. Mamish, responds to Kuperman: “After further consideration, the NRC has decided not to pursue the staff proposal and, for the foreseeable future, will adhere to the policy established by former Chairman Klein. The NRC encourages and values public comments and, absent a compelling reason for nondisclosure, will continue to make the majority of export license applications received publicly available.”

Kuperman praised the NRC’s quick response but expressed concern that some elements of the NRC staff apparently were not aware of the Commission’s own policy of public disclosure reaffirmed more than a decade ago. “Just as the NRC should have strong safety and security cultures, it also must have a strong culture of transparency to facilitate public participation in licensing decisions – a primary reason that Congress created the NRC in the first place in The Energy Reorganization Act of 1974.”

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