

DRAFT Minutes of the Radiation Protection Advisory Committee (RPAC) Meeting
Combination Virtual / In Person Meeting
October 10, 2025

Meeting called to order at 9:01 a.m.

Members in Attendance:

Aaron Fisher
Anthony Montagnese
Dr. Lara R. Paciello
Ian Irvin
Janice Wirth
Margaret Blackwood
Nate Burden
Anthony Hull

Justin Cantley
Christine Eckenrod

Members Absent:

Victor Rizzo
John Keklak
Marian Wolford
Steven King

DEP Staff in Attendance:

Aaron Emick
Alhaz Bah
Alyssa Oskin
Ashley Langan
Austyn Shank
Barbara Bookser
Benjamin Seiber
Brooke Loss
Bryan Werner
Christopher Heckert
Dale Davis
Daneen Leonard
Danielle Conley
David Baracco
David Gaisior
Denise Bleiler
Dennis Ferguson
Dennis Kutz
Derek Stahl
Lisa Funk
Devin Seiger
Drew Stuffick
Dwight Shearer
Dyran Altenburg
Elaine Crane
Elaine M Crescenzi
Elijah Cordrey
Emma Van Zandt
Grace Schoeniger
Jack Palumbo
Jamie Baddorf
Jeff Timcik
Jeffrey Cosklo
Jennifer Minnick
John Chippo
Joseph Koshy
Kristina Hoffman
Laura Campbell
Linda Davis
Joshua Myers

Lindsay Williamson
Lori Aquilanti Oleyar
Matthew Sims
Michelle Russo
Randy Kutchman
Robert Lewis
Ryan Bankert
Sean Gimbel
Serena Sadjian
Stephanie Banning
Stephan Brown
Stephen Seymore
Suzanne Sarver
Taylor Sherry
Troy Conrad
Victoria Parker
Laura Griffin
Erin Reynolds
Kathy King

Guests in Attendance:

Aaron Wilmot
Daniel Snyder
Kendall Berry
Samuel Einstein
Alexander Morrow
Bashar Ziadat
Brenda Colwell
Bruno LaRoc
Eric Gingold
Jennifer Rice

Kurt Blodgett
Daniel Pavord
Trent Machamer

The meeting began with the adoption of the agenda and the approval of the April 30, 2025 minutes, which required only minor corrections. Two new committee members were introduced: Anthony Hull of Applied Health Physics and Justin Cantley of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

During the review of prior minutes, Ms. Eckenrod requested clarification regarding whether individuals who fail their Board exam may continue working. Ms. Blackwood explained that graduates have six months to take the Board exam and cannot continue working afterward unless they pass. Ms. Oskin added that an individual who fails the exam may not simply move to another hospital and receive a new six-month grace period.

No members of the public registered to provide comment during the first open-floor session.

Director Shearer then provided updates on the Bureau of Radiation Protection (BRP). BRP remains entirely fee-funded and receives no General Fund support. The Radon Division's EPA grant funding has been exhausted, and the possibility of renewal is uncertain given the current federal environment. Six months prior, field division staff were merged with central office staff to improve consistency and communication among the three field regions. Director Shearer praised the Nuclear Safety and Emergency Response Division for successfully integrating field division training and equipment purchasing. The Bureau is also developing standardized enforcement procedures, preparing for relocation in the forthcoming renovated RCSOB building, and has completed full digitization of all NRC paper records while continuing to digitize all DEP paperwork.

Under the Governor's initiative, Salesforce has created a new online payment method for X-ray invoices. Although BRP has approximately 12,000 registrants, only three percent have used the current online platform to date, while the remaining 97 percent prefer to mail checks. The Bureau's long-term goal is to transition all registrants to online payments, though the timeline may be affected by the state budget impasse.

The Radon Division is preparing to operate with a reduced workforce and is exploring new business models and cost-saving measures. The Decommissioning and Environmental Surveillance Division is reviewing financial assurances and has assumed responsibility for monitoring TENORM, with efforts underway to expand staff knowledge beyond the one individual who previously managed the program. Radiation Control reports that operations continue without backlog, and inspections, registrations, and reviews are being completed as expected.

The Nuclear Safety and Emergency Response Division is adopting a Keyhole concept for evacuation planning that relies on prevailing wind direction rather than the traditional 10-mile evacuation radius. The division is also working toward implementation of the EPA's 2015

Protective Action Guides. Crane Clean Energy Center, formerly TMI Unit 1, is scheduled to return to service in 2028, and the division reports readiness for this development.

Across the field divisions, supervisors are using workload analyses to modernize operations. The COVID-19 pandemic created gaps in inspection schedules, and staff are evaluating ways to address them. GPS-based scheduling and updates to registrant data, including removing inactive users, are being explored to increase efficiency. A new online platform is expected to improve inspection, invoicing, and payment processes. In response to a question from Ms. Blackwood, Director Shearer explained that once the online system is fully implemented, paper invoices will no longer be issued.

The committee next reviewed Nuclear Material Events Database (NMED) incidents and Medical Reportable Events (MREs). There were two NMED medical events since the previous meeting. Five MREs occurred: one involved treatment to the wrong site due to misalignment; another involved misalignment that resulted in the patient receiving less than half of the intended dose during the fifteenth fraction; a third involved treatment to the wrong side of the body; a fourth involved treatment to the wrong lesion; and a fifth involved treatment to the wrong site.

Ms. Blackwood then raised the recent NRC informational notice regarding Y-90 microspheres. After a brief discussion, the committee agreed that the notice primarily highlighted procedural errors by physicians.

Mr. Montagnese noted that his facility has seen an increase in emergency department visits from patients who received radiopharmaceutical treatments elsewhere, creating potential issues with contamination and staff exposure. Since no regulatory guidance exists for such situations, facilities must manage these incidents independently. Dr. Paciello agreed, noting a significant rise in such cases as the use of radiopharmaceuticals has expanded. Her facility provides additional nursing training, distributes informational materials, and responds to calls when these situations arise. She emphasized that these events will continue to increase. Ms. Blackwood reported similar experiences at her facility and described distributing pamphlets to patients advising them to inform others when they have received radiopharmaceuticals.

Director Shearer then reviewed BRP's policy regarding individuals working under supervision before passing the ARRT Board exam. Ms. Eckenrod noted inconsistent hospital practices, with some facilities removing individuals from duty immediately upon failing the exam, while others allow them to continue working until their six-month eligibility period ends. Ms. Oskin clarified that BRP leaves this decision to the discretion of each hospital. Ms. Blackwood said her management initially resisted allowing continued work but changed its position due to staffing shortages. Mr. Montagnese added that facilities must closely track graduation dates to ensure compliance.

Director Shearer reported that the final-omitted NRC consistency rulemaking has been presented to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission and was adopted by the Environmental Quality Board.

He then provided a detailed revenue update. BRP is required to submit a three-year regulatory and fee program cost analysis. During the 2023 financial review, utilities requested clarity on how their fees are used. To address this, BRP reorganized its finances into several dedicated “buckets,” separating nuclear safety and emergency response funding from other BRP revenue streams and further dividing the latter into Radiation Control, Decommissioning and Environmental Surveillance, and the Radon Division. Budget projections show that Radiation Control will enter deficit in fiscal year 2027–2028 and that the Radon Division is already in deficit for 2025–2026, though the combined bucket remains positive. BRP plans to present a fee increase proposal at the January 2026 RPAC meeting, with potential implementation in July 2027.

Mr. Burden asked whether radon fees for testers and mitigators would increase under the proposal, and Director Shearer confirmed that all fees would rise. Burden noted that Pennsylvania already charges among the highest radon program fees nationally and suggested outreach to explain the increases. Director Shearer agreed, pointing out that radon awareness efforts have declined since the COVID-19 pandemic, and some radon-related costs might eventually shift to the General Fund. Mr. Lewis commented that the radon industry has become stagnant, with mitigation activity declining. Burden added that the Radon Division could operate with three or four staff instead of eight, a point Director Shearer acknowledged, reiterating that a smaller team could still maintain program quality and that BRP is seeking ways to reduce impacts on the regulated community.

No public comments were submitted during the second open-floor session.

During committee discussion, Mr. Burden asked whether updated radon maps could reflect actual testing data, noting that Philadelphia, though classified as a Zone 3 area, often shows test results above 50 picocuries per liter. Mr. Lewis responded that a student intern had recently assisted with mapping efforts and that new statistics will be posted once narrative text from BRP’s geologist is complete.

Ms. Blackwood asked for updates regarding an OSHA citation involving effective dose equivalent (EDE) calculations. Dr. Paciello summarized the situation, explaining that although OSHA cleared the facility’s use of EDE, it still cited them for exceeding quarterly dose limits without using EDE methodology, creating confusion. She suggested that BRP develop an FAQ to help facilities navigate such issues. BRP’s attorney, Ms. Williamson, cautioned that the Bureau cannot issue guidance that contradicts federal requirements or appears to supersede OSHA authority. Mr. Montagnese asked whether the previously drafted but unapproved white paper could be reposted with a disclaimer stating that it does not override federal regulations. Ms. Williamson advised that BRP cannot publish guidance that conflicts with OSHA standards.

Ms. Blackwood requested updates on regulatory issues related to accelerators and so-called “parking lot” regulations. Director Shearer explained that to limit confusion among the regulated community and the public, DEP programs typically limit themselves to one rulemaking package at a time. The fee increase package must be completed first, after which regulatory cleanup efforts may proceed, possibly for discussion at the fall RPAC meeting.

In closing, Ms. Blackwood asked about NRC workforce or regulatory developments since the government shutdown. Director Shearer reported that the NRC has received an exemption preventing furloughs for staff involved in grid-supporting activities such as power plants, small modular reactors, and microreactors. However, staff on the materials side of the NRC have been furloughed.

The meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m. The next RPAC meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2026, with additional meetings planned for April 8 and October 14, 2026. The committee anticipates that future meetings will likely use a hybrid in-person and virtual format.