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Summary Testimony of Pedro Pérez on Behalf of TRTR

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The National Organization of Test, Research, and Training Reactors (TRTR) welcomes and appreciates the opportunity to present information on university reactors to the Congressional Working Group on Nuclear Issues.

The Nation is facing a critical time. Over the past decade, a total of 15 URRs have closed down, leaving a remaining fleet of 27 URRs. Recently, several nationally recognized URRs have announced the university administration decision to evaluate shutting down their reactor if new federal and/or industrial support does not materialize. Losing these teaching and research reactors may cause an irreversible cascading effect in the URR community and severely impact the national engineering and scientific infrastructure.

URRs can be utilized to support a wide range of scientific disciplines, including the current thrust areas of the federal government in nanotechnology and biological sciences. In addition, URRs support the training of nuclear engineers vital to national security and the renaissance now beginning in the nuclear power industry.

The U.S. Department of Energy is recognized by TRTR as the stewards of university research reactors, so the community calls for the DOE Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology (ONEST) to spearhead a program to preserve and enhance our university research reactors. DOE has this responsibility both because of its mandate to assure adequate nuclear manpower, and because the scientific agencies such as NSF and NIH, that utilize reactors in support of their research agendas assume DOE will provide the required resources to make URRs available.

Specifically TRTR calls for DOE to (1) provide assistance in FY 2001 to those URRs facing documented survival situations without jeopardizing other DOE URR programs and (2) establish a long-term base support program for URRs beginning with FY02.

TRTR and NEDHO are committed to support DOE in establishing these programs such that the national needs for research, teaching and training utilizing URRs are met in a cost effective and fair manner.

Respectfully submitted by,

Pedro. B. Pérez