



NUCLEAR INFORMATION AND RESOURCE SERVICE

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NIRS 35th ANNIVERSARY ACTION PLAN:

CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR THE NEW GENERATION OF ACTIVISTS CREATING THE NUCLEAR-FREE, CARBON-FREE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

2013 marks NIRS' 35th anniversary. For more than three decades, NIRS has been both the core and catalyst for the grassroots movement for a safe, clean, affordable energy future. At times during this period, it has been tempting to think that NIRS would be no longer needed due to the nuclear industry's proclivities for self-destruction. But that, in fact, has never been the case, and is not the case for the foreseeable future.

Over the next half-decade, the United States will establish a new policy for radioactive waste disposal, which will affect nearly every American. Nuclear utilities will be watching the progress of four nuclear reactors currently under construction with an eye toward reviving some of the more than two dozen new reactor applications submitted to the NRC since 2007 but which are either not currently being pursued or are lagging in the licensing process. And the nuclear industry will be seeking additional 20-year license renewals on top of the 20-year renewals most reactors already have received.

The need for NIRS to combat these industry efforts, and to work toward re-directing our priorities toward building the nuclear-free, carbon-free energy future our nation—and planet—needs and deserves, remains strong, compelling, and growing.

The Fukushima nuclear disaster reminded the entire world of the dangers of nuclear power, while also placing severe strain on NIRS' resources due to vastly increased demand in both the U.S. and abroad for our expertise and services. These demands have continued at a high level, and NIRS' funding, which received a brief boost in the immediate aftermath of the Fukushima accident, has not kept pace. Indeed, NIRS' resources have been nearly stagnant on a per-staff

basis for a decade or more, leading to missed opportunities on both issue and organizational growth matters as well as concern over expert staff retention.

A new global generation of activists, raised on the internet, social networking and ever more mobile and instant means of communication, has emerged from the rubble of Fukushima. They are seeking strategic and tactical leadership, accurate information and political and technical expertise—all of which are NIRS' greatest strengths. Meeting these demands, along with those of the hundreds of grassroots groups NIRS has worked with for years, requires additional, but modest investment.

For these reasons, the NIRS Board of Directors and staff have adopted and will actively seek to implement the following goals as our capacity-building action plan from 2012 through 2015. We request your support in helping meet these essential goals.

Goal: Encourage staff retention by increasing staff salaries by 30% by 2015, through 10% increases each fiscal year.

Discussion: NIRS' chief asset is its veteran and expert staff, which no other organization in the world can even attempt to replicate. Three of NIRS' four program staff have more than 20 years with the organization, two more than 25 years. But NIRS' salaries, which always have been relatively low, have not kept even a shouting pace with those of similar organizations. This has led to concern about staff retention, as well as recruitment of qualified new staff, since new staff salary levels are pegged to existing staff salary levels.

Solution: NIRS proposes to make salaries more competitive by increasing current and starting staff salaries by 30% by FY 2015. Salaries would be raised by 10% each fiscal year through at least 2015.

Cost: Approximately \$25,000 first year, \$28,000 2nd year, 31,000 3rd year: total of \$84,000 over three years.

Goal: Increase effective e-mail list to 150,000

Discussion: NIRS e-mail list is currently above 41,000, with about 30,000 currently active. Our e-mail list is invaluable in supporting our actions at both the Congressional and regulatory levels, as well as at state levels, which we do frequently. NIRS has a higher open rate and higher response rate for our actions than any other environmental group we know of, meaning that our effectiveness on a per-person basis and a per-dollar basis is higher than just about everyone.

We believe increasing this list to 150,000 active members over the next three years is achievable with sufficient resources, and will pay off both in terms of increased grassroots funding and increased effectiveness on our issues. On a dollar basis, active members to dollars received is approximately 1:1.4, meaning that 29,000 active members generates about \$40k annually online. Increasing that number five-fold—an entirely realistic goal given current growth rates—should result in annual online revenues of around \$200k. In addition, this means the average NIRS action would generate at least 15,000 responses; particularly important

actions would generate 30,000 actions or more each—greatly enhancing NIRS effectiveness at shaping nuclear policy.

Solution: NIRS' list grows organically—through Facebook, Twitter, other viral efforts, and the like—by about 12,000 annually. This would bring us to about 65,000 by 2015 with no additional effort beyond current outreach. To slightly more than double that amount will require additional funds for issue-oriented web-based advertising, which has the added benefit of increasing effectiveness on those issues advertised. To explain further, when people take action due to a NIRS Alert, or ad, or other outreach means, they are added to NIRS list and receive future NIRS communications unless they choose to unsubscribe from our lists. Most people do not choose to unsubscribe, believing that the actions NIRS offers them to take are worth their time and effort. Our typical response rate is about 220 per 1,000, meaning that with 150,000 active accounts, as many as 30,000 people or sometimes more would be expected to take action.

Cost: Based on smaller test ads conducted since Fukushima, approximately \$1 per person added, or \$75,000 over three years--\$25,000 each year. This is particularly modest given the added effect increased participation has on our issues and the increased revenue a larger base would generate. We believe there is no real “upper end” of how far we can grow this list, other than availability of resources. In other words, with more resources, even greater growth in effectiveness and revenue would be expected.

Goal: Add Associate Director

Discussion: NIRS' greatest strength is the expertise, ability, institutional memory and commitment of its veteran staff—each of our key program staff has been with NIRS for more than 20 years. But change and growth also requires new ideas and approaches. Thus, NIRS will hire a senior-level Associate Director during 2013 who will become well-trained in NIRS' approach to the issues and ways of operating, but will also be expected to bring those new ideas necessary to achieve the kind of growth and change a robust middle-aged organization requires.

Solution: A joint NIRS board-staff committee has written and issued a job description for a newly-created Associate Director position, with the goal of having a person in place by September 2013. This person will be involved at a high-level in both program and administrative/development work, with the long-term intent that this person will eventually become executive director.

Cost: Estimated starting salary of \$55,000/year, plus health insurance and other costs. Total approximately \$75,000 first year, increasing annually by 10%.

Goal: Add writer/blogger/social media activist, from within

NIRS has taken great advantage of social media to improve our recognition and outreach over the past two years. For example, our Facebook presence has grown from less than 5,000 to 12,000+ while our Twitter subscribers have grown from about 200 to more than 1700—with verified outreach to some 20-50,000 people daily.

Discussion: Effective outreach is key to NIRS strategy for both effectiveness and continued growth. Currently, NIRS social media presence is done entirely by NIRS' Executive Director, on an extremely part-time basis—a few hours weekly. For most younger and newer activists social networking is part of their daily lives—it is the best way to reach and engage them. An active, useful and meaningful social network and internet strategy is essential for continued growth of our movement.

Solution: As the new Associate Director is able to take on greater responsibilities, NIRS' current Executive Director will take a greater role in promoting NIRS and our issues through creation of a new NIRS daily blog, *Nuclear Matters*; as well as running NIRS website; continuing and building a clear, effective and growing presence for NIRS on Facebook, Twitter and expanding NIRS presence to other social media platforms where we are not currently active (such as Google+, pinterest, tumblr, etc.). We would expect, given current rates of growth, a minimum 150% increase in Facebook contacts and a 300% increase in Twitter contacts. With sufficient attention paid, which can be time-consuming, similarly rapid growth should take place for other social media sites NIRS is not currently using, during the period 2012-2015. In addition, this will assist with other outreach and mobilization efforts due to the synergistic effect of social media outreach and growth of e-mail and other contact lists.

Cost: no additional cost

Goal: Enter the 21st Century with improved mobile communications and outreach

Discussion: Mobile communication—with smart phones, tablets and the like—is increasingly vital for progressive organizations like NIRS, where staff members are frequently traveling and where supporters, especially younger ones, increasingly use such devices more than computers and landlines. It is no longer sufficient to have a web and social media presence; progressive organizations must have a mobile presence too, through useful mobile apps. However, NIRS does not currently provide smart phones or any mobile devices to staff. Nor does NIRS have the expertise in-house to develop mobile apps.

Solution: NIRS should provide smart phones and tablets to staff with an organizational phone plan so staff members can make use of the advantages of such devices, and need not spend their personal resources on work-related calls and internet usage. NIRS should hire appropriate progressive consultants to develop and initially maintain useful mobile apps (ongoing maintenance would be done by the new hire described above).

Cost: Smartphone options and plans vary widely. A ballpark figure is \$6,000/year in new costs. Since landline and long distance costs have dropped so much over the years and we no longer do much long-distance faxing, this would only bring NIRS' overall "telephone" budget line back to where it was about 10 years ago (around \$1,000/month). Initial one-time development of mobile apps could be expected to cost in the \$10-15,000 range, and would incur monthly costs in the \$400-500 range if developed properly for both advocacy and fundraising purposes (note: this page talks a little bit about such mobile uses and costs:

<http://www.netrootsfoundation.org/2012/10/whats-it-cost-mobile/>).

Goal: Strengthen the NIRS/WISE partnership and international coordination

Discussion: Since 2000, NIRS and World Information Service on Energy (WISE), based in Amsterdam, have worked in partnership to provide an international anti-nuclear presence to

counter the multinational nuclear power industry. This partnership proved its worth in its very first year, when NIRS/WISE jointly led a major—and successful—international campaign at the COP6 meeting in The Hague to keep nuclear power out of the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. Currently the NIRS/WISE network consists of 12, mostly volunteer, offices on five continents. The network's newsletter, *The Nuclear Monitor*, is edited and published from the WISE Amsterdam office.

In recent years, due to stagnant revenue combined with rising costs of operation, NIRS has been unable to meet our financial obligation to pay for a significant portion of the costs of *The Nuclear Monitor* despite their inclusion in our annual budget (*The Monitor* is offered as a benefit to NIRS supporters of \$35/year or more). And a change in Dutch government policy has resulted in significant lost revenue to WISE. This situation needs to be reversed. In addition, lack of resources in recent years has resulted in missed opportunities for effective, coordinated international campaigns as well as an inability to hold annual meetings of our network offices, which have proved extremely valuable in the past as they bring together grassroots activists from across the world to engage in concerted strategic and tactical coordinated planning.

Solution: NIRS believes strongly that a strong and highly-networked international presence for a nuclear-free, carbon-free future is necessary to effectively challenge an increasingly merged and multinational nuclear industry. With international communication easier and faster than ever, the only issue is sufficient resources. NIRS requires adequate resources to meet our budgetary commitment to *The Nuclear Monitor* (which we intend to revamp in 2013, most likely with a new editor from the often-neglected Southern Hemisphere). We also believe resources are needed to resume joint international campaigning/outreach on specific issues, such as nuclear power's inability to address the climate crisis (*The Nuclear Monitor* published the first major study on this issue in January 2005).

Cost: \$36,000 is currently allocated for *The Nuclear Monitor* in NIRS' annual budget. No change is proposed for this line. \$20,000 additional annually for NIRS/WISE activities would allow a resumption of joint campaigning and a share of the costs of annual meetings (primarily transportation costs for far-flung activists).

Goal: Replenish NIRS cash reserve fund.

Discussion: In early 2001, NIRS received a major donation that allowed us to establish a cash reserve fund of \$300,000. The timing was fortuitous as foundation funding cratered due to the dot.com bubble and 9/11, reaching a low point for NIRS in FY 2003 of \$15,000 in total foundation donations, compared to \$400K+ in FY 2001, and which rebounded slowly. Not surprisingly perhaps, this downturn therefore led to the full expenditure of this reserve fund by the end of FY 2004.

As revenue rebounded, the NIRS board at the time chose to expend resources on additional staff rather than replenishing this fund (or address other priorities). By mid-2007, this had become unsustainable and led to the spinoff of the expensive and duplicative Beyond Nuclear project.

Since that time, NIRS' cash reserve fund has varied between \$5 and \$15k—an insufficient amount to provide effective backup to the vagaries of funding, unexpected expenses, etc.

Solution: NIRS Board and Staff believe it is necessary to increase NIRS' Cash Reserve Fund to approximately \$225,000 by 2015. This would provide adequate support for funding fluctuations while also providing a steady, if small, source of income for the organization.

Cost: \$75,000 per year over three years

Goal: Establish Campaign Reserve Fund

NIRS attempts to project needed campaign efforts on a constant, revolving basis. But sometimes events take precedence and require a speedy—and sometimes unavailable—reallocation of funds. For example, if NIRS had had such a fund in place, we could have done much more outreach and action on the fact that 23 U.S. reactors are virtually identical to those at Fukushima and need to be closed as quickly as possible. We did a lot with that (for example, we first identified this issue to the media, resulting in dozens of articles, and we generated more than 28,000 letters to Congress and the NRC in the three weeks following Fukushima), but we could have done more.

Discussion: Such a replenishable fund would enable NIRS to respond quickly and effectively to events as they occur and matter. It need not be a nuclear accident, rather it could be any opportunity to frame and expand our message.

Solution: Establishment of a Campaign Reserve Fund of \$100,000 that would be available to support campaigns not budgeted in the annual budget either because the costs and/or events were not foreseen, or because new and unexpected opportunities arise. NIRS would receive general support from interest from this fund.

Cost: This would cost about \$33,000 per year over the next three years.

Total addition to NIRS budget for all recommendations: First year, \$158,000; second year, an additional \$70,000; third year, an additional \$33,000, or about \$270,000 added to NIRS annual budget from FY 2012 levels beginning in FY 2015 (plus \$10-15,000 in one-time costs for development of mobile apps). The overall projected expense numbers for each year are provided below. For perspective, this increase is far less than the salaries of many staff of opposing groups like Nuclear Energy Institute (actually, our entire projected budget is less than the CEO of NEI's salary) and even of some directors and staff of national environmental organizations. This is quite modest given the history, effectiveness and necessity of NIRS as the catalyst for the national movement for a nuclear-free, carbon-free energy future.

FY 2012 budget projected expenses: \$578,950

FY 2013 budget projected expenses: \$709,500

FY 2014 budget projected expenses: \$807,500

FY 2015 budget projected expenses: \$840,500