

January 24, 2011

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Dear Dr. Oliver,

I have read your paper, "Wildfire in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone: A Worst Case Scenario." My overall reaction is that it was clearly written and easy to follow, and the four linked sub-models are appropriate analytical elements.

The paper is a self-described worst case analysis, and I think this likely to be the case, although one possible exception is noted. That assumptions about exposures and risks from food pathways may not be conservative is addressed in the report. Several pathways that were not analyzed are noted in my specific comments and I think that they are unlikely to offset the highly conservative assumption that everything that can burn in the CEZ will burn completely and that during a 5-day fire, the wind does not change direction.

The one issue where I am not sure that the analysis is a worst case concerns the treatment of releases as a point source. This is discussed in the specific comments.

Per your request, included with this letter are my one-page bio and my specific comments in response to the following questions:

1. The report links four models. Which of the models do you feel competent to comment on? (hopefully, as many as possible)
2. Are the analyses in the report adequate? Do they lead to results and conclusions that you feel comfortable endorsing? (Please add any reservations you have here or in #3, #4, or #5.)
3. What are the cautions with the report? And, what are its strengths?
4. Do you feel additional or different analyses that should be done before the report is released?
5. For future analyses, can you suggest additional or different analyses that would enhance the certainty of the report, even though the report is certain enough to be released as is—or with minor change/cautions/etc.
6. Please make any other comments and/or general suggestions here.

Sincerely,



Chris Whipple