

March 11, 2001

Stephan Brocoum, Assistant Manager
Office of Licensing and Regulatory Compliance
U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
P.O. Box 30307
North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

SUBJECT: FUTURE U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION/U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF ENERGY TECHNICAL EXCHANGES

Dear Mr. Brocoum:

During the last several weeks, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) have had several discussions regarding the upcoming technical exchanges and associated management meetings (technical exchanges). Based on a March 5, 2001, call with your staff, we agreed that five technical exchanges are needed in the next few months to discuss issue resolution. These five technical exchanges are discussed below (two of which involve performance assessment).

Total System Performance Assessment and Integration (TSPAI) - During the March 5, 2001, call, we agreed that the TSPAI Key Technical Issue (KTI) will be covered in two technical exchanges. The first technical exchange would solely discuss Features, Events, and Processes (FEPs). It is my understanding that leading up to this interaction, several clarifying telephone discussions and possibly an Appendix 7 meeting will be necessary to discuss the FEPs Analysis Model Reports (AMRs) which we have been, and will be, receiving. This technical exchange is scheduled to take place on May 15-17, 2001. The second technical exchange would cover the TSPAI subissues and is scheduled to take place the week of June 25, 2001. In our conversation, your staff stated that the last of the FEP AMRs should be received by the NRC by March 23, 2001. To ensure the necessary NRC reviews take place and to give the DOE enough time to review any questions we may have regarding FEPs prior to the May 15, 2001, technical exchange, it is imperative that we receive the last FEPs AMR by March 23, 2001. During the next couple weeks, we will provide you with our FEPs review schedule and will discuss with your staff if an Appendix 7 meeting is needed. To ensure all the stakeholders have an opportunity to be involved in the issue resolution process, both your staff and the NRC agreed that the Appendix 7 meeting, if needed, would be open to public observation.

In Revision 3 to the TSPAI Issue Resolution Status Report (IRSR), the four subissues are discussed and the information needs for any potential license application are addressed. Past meetings on other KTIs have addressed a number of questions that are relevant to the TSPAI subissues. These questions do not need to be discussed in the upcoming meetings. However, issues deferred to the TSPAI meeting from these earlier meetings on other KTIs will need to be discussed. In addition, remaining questions pertaining to FEPs and the integrated

subissues will need to be discussed, as necessary, to resolve the TSPAI subissues. Please note that resolving the TSPAI subissues of multiple barriers and the overall performance objective will be limited to questions addressing methodology and supporting information. During future calls to discuss the TSPAI agenda, the NRC staff will also provide you its TSPAI questions and concerns which we would like to have addressed at the technical exchanges.

Pre-Closure Safety - During the March 5, 2001, call, your staff proposed to have the technical exchange on pre-closure the week of July 23, 2001. We believe that this timeframe is acceptable and will give the NRC staff enough time to prepare for the meeting. The NRC staff is currently reviewing DOE the Preclosure Safety Assessment and related referenced documents. NRC staff will provide a list of topics related to preclosure safety by the end of March 2001 and plans to have several interactions with DOE via both telephone and Appendix 7 meetings to provide clarifying information and discuss these topics.

Igneous Activity KTI - During the March 5, 2001, call, your staff proposed to have another Igneous Activity (IA) technical exchange the week of May 21, 2001. Your staff stated that the purpose of this meeting would be to cover the one remaining open item from the August 29-31, 2000, IA technical exchange. The NRC staff is currently reviewing a number of issues pertaining to the IA KTI and, therefore, we are not able to state at this point that we will be ready for a technical exchange in May 2001. After completing our review of the issues (currently scheduled to be complete by March 30, 2001), we will contact you to discuss when we will be prepared for an IA technical exchange.

Repository Temperature - During the March 5, 2001, call, your staff proposed to have a technical exchange to discuss the impact of an alternative design (cooler repository) on the status of resolution for affected KTIs. During this meeting you would present what actions and activities you are completing to address the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board questions in this area. In addition, you would indicate how those activities impact existing issue resolution agreements. The date you proposed was the week of July 9, 2001. We believe that this timeframe is acceptable.

If you have any questions on this letter, please contact Mr. James Andersen of my staff. He can be reached at (301) 415-5717.

Sincerely,

/RA/

C. William Reamer, chief
High-Level Waste Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

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Letter to S. Brocoun from C.W. Reamer dated: March 11, 2001

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