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OVERNIGHT MAIL

John T. Greeves, Director
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U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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PROPOSED U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION/U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S (NRC/DOE) INTERACTIONS AND KEY TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS TO SUPPORT DOE'S SITE RECOMMENDATION DECISION

This letter describes a proposal, modeled on a very similar and successful process employed to support the NRC's review of the Viability Assessment (VA), for providing the NRC with reports that describe the technical basis that will support the DOE's Site Recommendation decision in June 2001. Plans for this proposal were briefly discussed at the August 1999 NRC/DOE Management Meeting.

The DOE's current plan calls for completion of a Site Recommendation Consideration Report (SRCR) in November 2000 and its subsequent release for public review and comment. Based on our present plan for developing the SRCR, these technical reports will be available on the schedule identified in Enclosure 1. The reports include the Yucca Mountain Site Description, the Total System Performance Assessment-SR (TSPA-SR), Process Model Reports (PMRs), appropriate Analysis and Model Reports (AMRs), appropriate System Description Documents (SDDs), and key supporting design analyses and reports (particularly those associated with the waste form and waste package). As these key documents become available, the DOE will transmit them to the NRC.

To provide the NRC with technical information related to the Site Recommendation and to provide the DOE with an opportunity to respond to your questions or comments on the references or the SRCR, the DOE also proposes a series of interactions, identified in Enclosure 2, to focus on specific information contained in the technical reports. Schedules for these meetings are contingent on availability of the documents and staff at our respective agencies. Therefore, the interactions would occur after the reports are completed and transmitted to the NRC, with a suitable time for your review. If you agree with our approach, these interactions would be incorporated into our master NRC/DOE interactions list, which would also reflect any other interactions, as agreed to on a standard semi-annual basis


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The types of information to be discussed may include the technical status of the work described in the reports, the Quality Assurance status of the information presented, the status of the resolution of regulatory issues, and/or the status of any additional work planned before or during licensing. The proposed series of meetings in Enclosure 2 is based on the completion of the PMRs that summarize the postclosure site characterization analyses that are being prepared in support of the SR, and the SDDs and PMRs that describe the waste form proposal. In general, the meetings would focus on topics or issues identified by the NRC as important to completing preliminary comments on sufficiency of information. It is understood that the proposed meetings are informal pre-licensing consultations.

Finally, the series of proposed interactions include several meetings in early 2001. The purpose of these meetings is two-fold. First, the meetings will allow the DOE an opportunity to respond to any issues or concerns from the NRC that may have arisen during earlier interactions on the technical documents submitted to the NRC. Second, recognizing that the DOE will be producing updated versions of the basis reports (i.e., the PMRs and the TSPA-SR), this will allow an opportunity to discuss with the NRC any new information or changes, if any, in our conclusions that may result from these updated reports. In this regard, we do not presently anticipate that the technical content of the updated basis reports will differ significantly from the earlier versions that will have been discussed at the proposed interactions; these updated reports are expected to simply refine our approach and thinking. Although some of the proposed meetings in early 2001 will occur after the release of the SRCR, the DOE believes it is important to have this dialogue with the NRC prior to the DOE's site recommendation decision, to take full advantage of any additional insights you may have.

After you have had an opportunity to consider the approach that we have proposed to upcoming NRC/DOE interactions on our key technical documents, we would welcome any additional questions you might have, as well as your response to the proposal we have outlined. Please direct comments on this letter or the enclosures to J. Timothy Sullivan at (702) 794-5589 or April V. Gil at (702) 794-5578.



Stephan Brocoum
Assistant Manager, Office of
Licensing and Regulatory Compliance

OL&RC:AVG-0055

Enclosures:

1. Key Technical Reports
2. Proposed Plan for
Interactions with NRC
Through April 2001

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cc w/encls:

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