

SEP 30 1991

SNL AUDIT

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Mr. Dwight E. Shelor, Associate Director
for Systems and Compliance
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
U. S. Department of Energy, RW 30
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Mr. Shelor:

SUBJECT: OBSERVATION AUDIT OF SANDIA NATIONAL LABORATORIES

This letter transmits the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Observation Audit Report No. 91-12 for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)/Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Project Office (YMPO) Quality Assurance (QA) Audit No. 91-07 of Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) conducted at Albuquerque, New Mexico during the week of August 19-23, 1991. The NRC staff evaluated the DOE/YMPO QA audit to gain confidence that DOE and SNL are properly implementing the requirements of their QA programs. The NRC staff based its evaluation of the DOE/YMPO audit process and the SNL QA program on direct observations of the auditors, discussions with the audit team and SNL staff, and reviews of the pertinent audit information (e.g., audit plan, checklists, and SNL documents).

The NRC staff has determined that, overall, QA Audit No. 91-07 of SNL achieved its purpose of determining the effectiveness of the SNL QA program implementation for the areas that were audited. The audit was conducted in a professional manner. The audit team was well prepared, and their checklist items were adequately described in the audit plan.

The NRC staff agrees with the preliminary DOE/YMPO audit team findings that the SNL QA program was adequately implemented for the areas that were audited, with the exception of Criteria 12 and 18. Criterion 12 is indeterminate and Criterion 18 is marginally effective. The NRC also agrees with the DOE/YMPO audit team that SNL has made considerable progress from last year in implementing its QA program. SNL should initiate timely corrective actions for the weaknesses identified by the DOE/YMPO audit team.

DOE must closely monitor the SNL QA program to ensure that future implementation is carried out in an adequate manner. The NRC staff expects to participate in this monitoring as observers and may perform its own independent audits at a later date to assess the SNL QA program.

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A written response to this letter or the enclosed report is not required. If you have any questions, please call William Belke on (301)/FTS 492-0445.

Sincerely,

(Original Signed by *Joseph J. Linehan*)

for John J. Linehan, Acting Director
Repository Licensing and Quality
Assurance Project Directorate
Division of High-Level Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Enclosure: As Stated

cc: R. Loux, State of Nevada
C. Gertz, DOE/NV
S. Bradhurst, Nye County, NV
M. Baughman, Lincoln County, NV
D. Bechtel, Clark County, NV
D. Weigel, GAO
P. Niedzielski-Eichner, Nye County, NV
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