

October 18, 1994

Mr. Ronald A. Milner, Associate Director for
Program Management and Integration
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
U.S. Department of Energy, RW 30
1000 Independence Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20585

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE) STUDY PLAN ON
"CHARACTERIZATION OF FUTURE REGIONAL CLIMATE AND
ENVIRONMENTS" (REVISION 0) (8.3.1.5.1.6)**

Dear Mr. Milner:

On July 8, 1994, DOE transmitted the subject study plan to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for review and comment. The NRC staff has completed its review of the study plan using the "Review Plan for the NRC Staff Review of DOE Study Plans, Revision 2," (dated March 10, 1993). Based on its review of the study plan, the staff considers the material submitted to be consistent, to the extent possible at this time, with the revised NRC-DOE "Level of Detail Agreement and Review Process for Study Plans," (dated March 22, 1993).

A major purpose of the review is to identify concerns with studies, tests, or analyses that, if started, could cause significant and irreparable adverse effects on the site, the site characterization program, or the eventual usability of the data for licensing. Such concerns would constitute "objections," as that term has been used in earlier NRC staff reviews of DOE documents related to site characterization, (e.g., "Consultation Draft Site Characterization Plan" and the "Site Characterization Plan for the Yucca Mountain Site"). It does not appear that the conduct of the activities described in this study plan will have adverse impacts on repository performance and the review of this study plan identified no objections with any of the activities proposed.

As part of its study plan review, the NRC staff determines whether or not detailed comments or questions are warranted. Based on this initial review, the staff has decided that a detailed review is warranted. Staff comments will be sent to the DOE at a later date. The NRC staff note that, in its transmittal letter, DOE did not identify any SCA open items that are related to this study plan.

If you have any questions concerning this review, please contact Neil Coleman at (301) 415-6615.

Sincerely,

Margaret V. Federline, Chief
Performance Assessment & Hydrology Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

cc: See Attached List

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