

APR 30 1992

Mr. John P. Roberts, Acting Associate Director
for Systems and Compliance
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Mr. Roberts:

SUBJECT: OBSERVATION AUDIT OF LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY

This letter transmits the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Observation Audit Report No. 92-09 for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, Yucca Mountain Quality Assurance Division (YMQAD), Quality Assurance (QA) Audit No. YMP-92-12 of the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) QA program conducted in Los Alamos, New Mexico from March 17-20, 1992. The audit scope was limited to four QA programmatic elements and five technical areas evaluated by QA and technical specialists.

The NRC staff evaluated the audit to gain confidence that DOE and LANL are properly implementing the requirements of their QA programs. The NRC staff based its evaluation of the audit process and the LANL QA program on direct observations of the auditors, discussions with audit team and LANL personnel, and reviews of pertinent audit information (e.g., audit plan, checklists, and LANL documents).

The NRC staff has determined that Audit No. YMP-92-12 was useful and effective considering the limited amount of quality-affecting work included in the scope of the audit. The audit was well organized and conducted in a professional manner with minimal logistic delays. The audit team was well prepared and its checklist items were adequately described in the audit plan.

The NRC staff determined that the audit was effective, and implementation of the LANL QA program was adequate for the four programmatic elements and five technical areas that were audited. One deficiency for the LANL QA program was noted and added to an existing deficiency report because it was similar in nature. A second deficiency will be issued to the Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Project Office. These deficiencies are not significant in terms of the overall QA program and did not affect the quality of any LANL site characterization activities.

DOE should continue to monitor the LANL QA program to ensure that it is implemented adequately. 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 adequacy and effectiveness of the LANL QA program.

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Mr. John P. Roberts

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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) 504-2445.

Sincerely,

JJH

Joseph J. Holonich, 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
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