

MAY 17 1990

Mr. Ralph Stein, Associate Director  
for Systems Integration and Regulations  
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management  
U.S. Department of Energy, RW-30  
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Mr. Stein:

SUBJECT: OBSERVATION AUDIT OF LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY

This letter transmits the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Observation Audit Report No. 90-2 for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)/Yucca Mountain Project Office (YMPO) Quality Assurance (QA) Audit No. 90-1 of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) conducted at Los Alamos, New Mexico from March 26-30, 1990. The NRC staff evaluated the DOE/YMPO QA 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 the audit team, and reviews of the pertinent audit information (e.g., audit plan, checklists, and LANL documents).

The NRC staff has determined that, overall, DOE/YMPO Audit No. 90-1 of LANL was effective. The programmatic and technical portions of the audit were generally effective and well integrated.

The NRC staff agrees with the DOE/YMPO audit team preliminary finding that, in general, the LANL Yucca Mountain Project (YMP) QA program has sufficient controls in place to continue work such as the development of technical procedures and study plans. Such activities will allow LANL YMP to demonstrate the ability to implement its QA program prior to the start of any new site characterization activities.

As determined by the DOE/YMPO audit team, the adequacy of the LANL YMP audit and surveillance program and the corrective action program could not be determined due to lack of implementation. NRC acceptance of the LANL YMP QA program for new site characterization work, thus resolving the NRC QA objection in the Site Characterization Analysis, can only occur after LANL YMP has demonstrated the ability to adequately implement its QA program.

The DOE/YMPO audit team identified LANL YMP procurement activities as an area requiring LANL management attention. The NRC staff also believes that resolution of LANL YMP software QA problems requires DOE and LANL management attention.

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

A written response to this letter on the enclosed report is not required. If you have any questions, please call Mark Delligatti on (301) 492-0430

*151*  
John J. Linehan, Director  
Repository Licensing and Quality  
Assurance Project Directorate  
Division of High-Level Waste Management

Enclosure: As stated

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

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\*See previous concurrence

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