



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

SUBJECT: OBSERVATION OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE) AUDIT OF THE
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT HIGH-LEVEL WASTE DIVISION
(EM-323)

Dear Mr. Milner:

I am transmitting the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Observation Audit Report OA-95-08 for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM), Office of Quality Assurance Headquarters audit of the quality assurance (QA) program of the Office of Environmental Management High-Level Waste Division (EM-323). The audit, HQ-ARC-95-08, was conducted from June 26-30, 1995, at the EM-323 offices in Germantown, Maryland. The audit evaluated the adequacy and effectiveness of the EM-323 QA program in all applicable QA programmatic areas.

The NRC staff evaluated the Headquarters audit to gain confidence that OCRWM Headquarters has an effective verification process and that the EM-323 organization is properly implementing the requirements of their QA program described by its Standard Practice Procedures. The NRC staff based its evaluation of the Headquarters audit process and the EM-323 QA program on direct observations of the audit team members; discussions with audit team and EM-323 personnel; and reviews of the audit plan, the audit checklists, and pertinent EM-323 documents.

The NRC staff has determined that Headquarters Audit HQ-ARC-95-08 was useful and effective. The audit was organized and conducted in a thorough and professional manner. Audit team members were independent of the activities they audited. The audit team was well qualified in the QA discipline, and its assignments and checklist items were adequately described in the audit plan.

The NRC staff agrees with the preliminary Headquarters audit team finding that the overall implementation of the EM-323 QA program is effective. Three preliminary Corrective Action Requests (CARs) were discussed by the Headquarters audit team at the post-audit meeting. Two other potential CARs were acceptably resolved by the EM-323 organization during the audit. Neither the preliminary nor potential CARs identified by the Headquarters audit team are significant in terms of the overall EM-323 QA program.

Headquarters should continue to closely monitor implementation of the EM-323 QA program to ensure that the deficiencies identified during this audit are corrected in a timely manner and that future QA program implementation is

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effective. The NRC staff expects to participate in this monitoring as observers and may perform its own independent audits at a later date to assess EM-323 in the implementation of its QA program.

A written response to this letter or the enclosed report is not required. If you have any questions, please call John Buckley of my staff on (301) 415-6607.

Sincerely,

(Original signed by John O. Thoma for)

Joseph J. Holonich, Chief
High-Level Waste & Uranium Recovery
Projects Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Enclosure: As stated

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