



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

February 12, 1996

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

SUBJECT: OBSERVATION AUDIT OF SANDIA NATIONAL LABORATORIES

Dear Mr. Milner:

I am transmitting Nuclear Regulatory Commission Observation Audit Report OA-96-02 of the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, Office of Quality Assurance, Yucca Mountain Quality Assurance Division (YMQAD) audit of the quality assurance (QA) program of the Sandia National Laboratories (SNL). The audit, YM-ARP-96-05, was conducted on January 22 through 26, 1996, at SNL offices in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The State of Nevada was not represented at this audit.

This performance-based audit evaluated the implementation of the SNL QA program and the quality of the resultant end products associated with the in situ thermo-mechanical properties of Yucca Mountain to determine the degree to which they meet program requirements and commitments.

The NRC staff determined that the audit was effective. The audit team found that the SNL QA program had been satisfactorily implemented in the areas audited except for the activities associated with the review of work agreements that were judged to be marginal. The NRC staff agrees with these conclusions. One preliminary Deficiency Report (DR) and one preliminary Performance Report (PR) were initiated by the audit team. DRs are used to report nonsignificant deficiencies, and PRs are used to report isolated conditions that require only remedial actions or minor improvements to meet requirements. The preliminary DR related to the lack of objective evidence of acceptable review and comment resolution of work agreements. The preliminary PR was written because the customer of a work agreement had signed it, indicating approval and that all comments had been resolved, prior to the time that the technical reviewer/quality assurance reviewer had signed it to document the review and resolution of comments.

YMQAD should continue to closely monitor implementation of the SNL QA program to ensure that the deficiencies identified during this audit are corrected in a timely manner and that future QA program implementation is 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 SNL implementation of its QA program.

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Mr. Dwight E. Shelor

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A written response to this letter is not required. If you have any questions, please call Jack Spraul of my staff on (301) 415-6715.

Sincerely,

[Original signed by:]

John H. Austin, Chief  
Performance Assessment and High-Level  
Waste Integration Branch  
Division of Waste Management  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

Enclosure: As stated

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