

February 14, 1997

Mr. Robert R. Loux, Executive Director  
Agency for Nuclear Projects  
Nuclear Waste Project Office  
Capitol Complex  
Carson City, Nevada 89710

Dear Mr. Loux:

Thank you for providing me with a copy of your letter to Mr. Wesley Barnes of the Department of Energy (DOE) dated January 7, 1997, concerning closure of the commitment to monitor ambient pneumatic conditions at Yucca Mountain. Like the State of Nevada, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has been tracking this issue for several years. It is our understanding that DOE is terminating pneumatic monitoring only in NRG-6 and NRG-7a. Pneumatic monitoring will continue in other boreholes where new data can be collected.

In your letter you indicate that "analysis of limited ambient pneumatic datasets...suggests that pneumatic pathways are present and therefore a potential public health and safety concern." We would be very interested in reviewing your analysis on which this conclusion is based and understanding your view as to how termination of monitoring in NRG-6 and NRG-7a is related to this conclusion.

We look forward to your response on this issue.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Margaret V. Federline  
Deputy Director  
Division of Waste Management  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

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