



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

March 12, 1997

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. John H. Austin, Chief
Performance Assessment and HLW Integration Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards

FROM: William L. Belke, Sr. On-Site Licensing Representative for Quality Assurance and Engineered Systems *Belke*

Chad J. Glenn, Sr. On-Site Licensing Representative for Natural Systems and Total Systems *Chad Glenn*

SUBJECT: U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION ON-SITE LICENSING REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN PROJECT FOR FEBRUARY 1997

The purpose of this letter is to transmit the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission On-Site Representative's (OR's) report for the period of February 1-28, 1997.

The principal purpose of the OR reports is to alert NRC staff, managers and contractors to information on U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) programs for site characterization, repository design, performance assessment, and environmental studies that may be of use in fulfilling NRC's role during pre-licensing consultation. The principal focus of this and future OR reports will be on DOE's programs for the Exploratory Studies Facility, (ESF) surface-based testing, performance assessment, data management systems and environmental studies. Relevant information includes new technical data, DOE's plans and schedules, and the status of activities to pursue site suitability and ESF development. In addition to communication of this information, any potential licensing concerns, or opinions raised in this report represent the views of the ORs and not that of NRC headquarters' staff.

The ORs continue to monitor ESF and surface-based testing activities. The Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) is expected to be daylighted on April 4, 1997. In the ESF, the excavation of the Heated Test Drift was completed. The Single Element Heater Test is ongoing in the Thermomechanical Alcove. The first phase of testing in the Northern Ghost Dance Fault Alcove was completed, and the Southern Ghost Dance Fault Alcove was excavated 134 meters to prepare for the start of testing. Surface-based work conducted over this period includes the start-up of the Fran Ridge Heater Test and the continuation of tracer testing at the

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C-Hole Complex. The location of a new borehole was staked on Yucca Mountain crest.

This OR Report lists an Open Item resulting from an NRC observation of a DOE audit pertaining to the quality assurance controls applied to statistical analysis software programs. This report also describes an effort by DOE to document significant changes in its site characterization program since the 1988 issuance of its Site Characterization Plan.

If you have any questions on this report or its enclosures, please call William L. Belke or Chad J. Glenn on (702) 388-6125.

cc w/enclosures as stated:

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