



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

April 9, 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 *WLB*
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 MARCH 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 March 1-31, 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 ESF activities include: geologic mapping and sampling; data gathering on the Single Element Heater Test, and ongoing work to prepare for the Heated Drift Test in Alcove 5; data gathering on the Ghost Dance Fault in Alcoves 6 and 7; and the initiation of planning for the construction of an East-West Drift. Surface-based activities include: data gathering on the Large Block Heater Test at Fran Ridge; pneumatic monitoring in boreholes; saturated zone tracer testing at the C-Hole Complex;

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and planning for drilling two new boreholes in the vicinity of Yucca Mountain.

Bill Belke attended the Spring meeting of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Committee on Nuclear Quality Assurance in Houston, Texas, on March 24-25, 1997. Meetings with the ORs and DOE QA Director and staff have been initiated for the purpose of resolving QA open items.

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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