Dr. John W. Bartlett, Director
Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

December 1, 1992

89001729

Dear Dr. Bartlett:

SUBJECT: TRANSMITTAL OF THE QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PRE-LICENSING PHASE OF THE CIVILIAN HIGH-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Enclosed for your information is a copy of SECY-92-392, the "Quarterly Progress Report on the Pre-Licensing Phase of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Civilian High-Level Radioactive Waste Management Program." The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff prepares Quarterly Progress Reports in order to provide the Commission with an assessment of progress being made on key aspects of the NRC and the DOE pre-licensing consultation program. This report covers the period from July through September 1992.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 504-3352, or Mr. Joe Holonich of my staff, at (301) 504-3387.

Sincerely,
Original Signed By
Guy A. Arlotto for

Robert M. Bernero, Director
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Enclosure: As stated

cc: R. Loux, State of Nevada
T. J. Hickey, Nevada Legislative Committee
C. Gertz, DOE/NV
M. Murphy, Nye County, NV
M. Baughman, Lincoln County, NV
D. Bechtel, Clark County, NV
D. Weigel, GAO
P. Niedzielski-Eichner, Nye County, NV
B. Mettam, Inyo County, CA
V. Poe, Mineral County, NV
F. Sperry, White Pine County, NV
R. Williams, Lander County, NV
P. Goicoechea, Eureka County, NV
L. Vaughan II, Esmeralda County, NV
C. Shank, Churchill County, NV
E. Holstein, Nye County, NV

CJP 12/1/92 #2

OFC	HLPD	C	HLPD	N	HLRD	N	HLWM	N
NAME	RCarlson		RJohnson	RC	JHolonich		JLinehan	
DATE	11/25/92		11/25/92		11/27/92		11/30/92	

OFC	HLWM	N	NMSS		NMSS			
NAME	BJYoungblood		GArlotto		RBernero			
DATE	11/30/92		12/1/92		12/1/92			

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POLICY ISSUE
(Information)

November 19, 1992 SECY-92-392

For: The Commissioners

From: James M. Taylor
Executive Director for Operations

Subject: QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PRE-LICENSING PHASE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S CIVILIAN HIGH-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Purpose: To provide the Commission with a Quarterly Progress Report (July through September 1992) on the pre-licensing phase of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) civilian high-level radioactive waste (HLW) management program.

Background: In the Quarterly Progress Report on the pre-licensing phase of DOE's program, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff discusses the key aspects of the NRC/DOE pre-licensing consultation program that deserve Commission attention. The previous Quarterly Progress Report, SECY-92-275, discussed activities that occurred from April through June 1992.

Executive Summary: The most significant activities during this period were related to the following area - DOE Implementation of Scheduled and Systematic Consultations.

NOTE: TO BE MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE IN 10 WORKING DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THIS PAPER

Contact:
Robert D. Carlson, NMSS
504-2435

DOE Implementation of Scheduled and Systematic Consultations

- On July 22, 1992, the NRC staff and DOE conducted a technical exchange to discuss the use of the staff's alternative approach for the implementation of 40 CFR Part 191. Representatives from the State of Nevada, Nye County, Nevada, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board (NWTRB) also attended the technical exchange. The staff and DOE provided a discussion and demonstration of the use of the staff's alternative approach, by using trial examples for the implementation of EPA's standard. During the technical exchange, DOE noted some concerns with the staff's proposed approach, as well as the concern that DOE might have to pursue two different approaches -- both EPA's and the staff's.

- During the week of July 27-31, 1992, the staff observed the 90 percent independent technical design review of the North Portal for the Exploratory Studies Facility (ESF). This design review, performed by Raytheon Services Nevada (RSN), was limited to the drawings, design studies, and specifications for the North Portal facility. The design review was both broad and thorough, and involved reviewers from more than six organizations, in addition to RSN.

- The staff participated in a site visit at Yucca Mountain on September 17-18, 1992, along with representatives of DOE, the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste (ACNW), NWTRB, State of Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office, State of Nevada Legislative Committee, and affected counties. The visit focused on recent work in trenches excavated to assess the presence and degree of faulting, and the potential for erosion of materials at the site of the waste-handling facilities for the proposed HLW repository. In addition, the staff was provided with an update on the continuing study of the June 29, 1992, earthquake at Little Skull Mountain, located approximately 15 kilometers from the proposed HLW site.

- DOE continued to actively conduct site characterization field work at Yucca Mountain. As of September 22, 1992, bore hole UZ-16 had been cored to approximately 745 feet. As of the end of this reporting period, the following site characterization activities had either been completed or were underway: excavation of four trenches, with the longest ranging up to 1100 feet in length, in Midway Valley, near the proposed site of the surface facilities; excavation of 33 test pits and one

borehole for investigation of soil and rock properties at the North Portal area of the ESF; 12 boreholes in the second phase of the unsaturated zone natural-infiltration-of-moisture study; excavation of trenches for the purpose of fault investigations of the Stagecoach Road, Solitario Canyon, and Windy Wash faults; and excavation of another 37 trenches for investigative work under the volcanism program. Additionally, exposures of the Paintbrush Canyon Fault on the west side of Busted Butte were improved by cleaning the bedrock with high-pressure air and water hoses for geologic mapping.

Discussion: 1. DOE Implementation of Scheduled and Systematic Consultations

During this reporting period, several interactions were conducted with DOE. On July 22, 1992, the NRC staff and DOE conducted a technical exchange to discuss the use of NRC's alternative approach (commonly referred to as the "three-bucket approach") for the implementation of 40 CFR Part 191 -- EPA's radiation protection standard for HLW. Representatives from the State of Nevada, Nye County, Nevada, EPA, and NWTRB also attended the technical exchange. The interaction consisted of NRC staff and DOE providing a discussion and demonstration of the use of the staff's alternative approach, by using trial examples for the implementation of EPA's standard. During the technical exchange, DOE noted some concerns with the staff's proposed approach, suggesting that it could be more stringent than the original 1985 standard, and that DOE would need additional guidance on how to identify and screen scenarios before it could implement the proposed alternative. DOE also expressed doubts about the desirability of the staff's alternative approach, and noted that it was concerned that DOE might have to pursue two different approaches -- both EPA's and the staff's. However, DOE has recommended that EPA include the "three-bucket approach" as an option, when EPA's standards are proposed for public review and comment.

On July 23, 1992, the staff met with representatives from DOE and the State of Nevada, to discuss changing the Level-of-Detail Agreement for DOE Study Plans. At the meeting, the staff and DOE presented proposed changes to the existing agreement, and discussed ways for improving the process for ensuring that study plans submitted by DOE were complete. The meeting closed with the staff and DOE identifying some changes that could be made after management review and approval, and agreeing

that some proposed changes would need to be discussed further. No affected units of local government attended; however, Inyo County, California, did submit a letter documenting its concerns with some DOE-proposed revisions to the agreement.

The staff's review of the April 17, 1992, version of DOE's "Mined Geologic Disposal System Annotated Outline Skeleton Text for the Preparation of a License Application" (MGDS AO) was completed and submitted to DOE on July 13, 1992. Because there were only limited data in this version of the MGDS AO, the staff's comments were confined to three concerns with information contained in the discussion of the engineered barrier system, in Chapter 5 of the MGDS AO. Each NRC comment referred to a potential DOE misunderstanding of requirements in applicable regulations or information contained in Draft Regulatory Guide DG-3003, "Format and Content of the License Application for the High-Level Waste Repository." The staff plans to work with DOE to correct these potential misunderstandings, and avert possible future problems in these areas during the license application review. DOE forwarded Revision 1 of the MGDS AO to NRC for review on September 30, 1992, which the staff is currently reviewing.

As noted in the previous Quarterly Progress Report, the staff met with the ACNW to discuss the results of its review of the DOE contractor report, "Report of Early Site Suitability Evaluation of the Potential Repository Site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada" (ESSE). These results were sent as comments, and transmitted to DOE in a letter dated July 22, 1992. In its review of the ESSE, the staff found that the application of the 10 CFR Part 960 siting guidelines in the evaluation appears to be inconsistent with its original intent, as concurred upon by the Commission. Additionally, the staff believes that the 10 CFR Part 960 HLW findings in the areas of tectonics, erosion, and natural resources presented in the ESSE may be premature, based on the available data, and may also be inconsistent with the intent of the siting guidelines.

On September 24, 1992, the staff transmitted to DOE, for comment, the draft revisions to the Procedural and Project-Specific Agreements outlining procedures for staff interface, consultation, and exchange of information between the two agencies during site characterization. These draft agreements reflect the numerous revisions that have been made to both documents during interactions between the staff and DOE over the

past year. Many of the changes involve updating the agreements to reflect the present organizational structures of both agencies. Few substantive changes were made. Language differences between the two agencies were resolved on four issues involving the following areas: access to computer codes/models and data base management; acquisition of site samples; access of NRC's onsite representatives to DOE and DOE contractor personnel and documents; and videotaping of geologic features. The staff anticipates finalizing these agreements by January 1993.

During the week of July 27-31, 1992, the staff and representatives of the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses (CNWRA) observed the 90 percent independent technical design review of the ESF North Portal, being held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The design is limited to the drawings, design studies, and specifications for the North Portal surface preparation, headwall and launching chamber, and electrical and water distribution systems. RSN performed the design review. The design review was both broad and thorough, and involved reviewers from more than six organizations, in addition to RSN. RSN is evaluating the design review comments to determine if any revisions in the North Portal design will be required. Representatives of the State of Nevada and Clark County, Nevada, participated as observers in the design review.

During this reporting period, the staff reviewed information provided by DOE to resolve SCA Objection 1, related to the ESF design control process and adequacy of the ESF design. Based on its assessment of the information provided by DOE, the staff proposed to lift SCA Objection 1. A letter notifying DOE of the staff's conclusions relative to Objection 1 will be transmitted during the next reporting period.

The staff visited the Yucca Mountain site on September 17-18, 1992. During the visit, the staff evaluated recent work in trenches excavated by DOE contractors from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), to assess the presence and degree of faulting at the site of the waste-handling facilities, for the proposed HLW repository. Representatives of DOE, ACNW, NWTRB, State of Nevada Waste Project Office, State of Nevada Legislative Committee, and affected units of local government also participated in this site visit. The staff visited areas within the proposed repository boundaries where USGS investigators are examining evidence related to the recency of faulting and the potential for erosion of materials that would overlay

the repository. In addition, the staff was provided with an update on the continuing study of the June 29, 1992, earthquake at Little Skull Mountain, located approximately 15 kilometers from the proposed HLW site.

The DOE Yucca Mountain Project Office (YMPO) continued to actively conduct site characterization field work at the Yucca Mountain, Nevada, site. The Lang LM-300 drill rig, which was built specifically for deep, dry coring, has been operating since May 27, 1992, and as of September 22, 1992, borehole UZ-16 had been cored to approximately 745 feet. The borehole, located outside the southeast boundary of the proposed repository site, will be used to provide detailed information on hydrologic properties, moisture content, and moisture potential in the unsaturated zone. The borehole is planned to extend approximately 1600 feet below the surface, reaching a depth of several hundred feet beneath the repository. As of September 1992, four trenches, the longest ranging up to 1100 feet in length, have been excavated in Midway Valley near the proposed site of the surface facilities. In the North Portal area of the ESF, 33 test pits have been excavated and investigated for soil and rock properties. One borehole (NRG-1) was completed in support of the North Portal and ramp design activities of the ESF. Phase II of the ESF activities related to the North Portal and ramp design was started on August 3, 1992.

In August 1992, exposures of the Paintbrush Canyon Fault on the west side of Busted Butte were improved by cleaning the bedrock with high-pressure air and water hoses for geologic mapping. Excavation of trenches, for the purpose of fault investigations of the Stagecoach Road, the Solitario Canyon, and the Windy Wash faults, also began in August 1992. Another 37 trenches have been excavated and investigated under the volcanism program, and work on two additional trenches on the Bare Mountain fault are planned for the beginning of October 1992.

Twelve boreholes in the first phase of the unsaturated zone natural-infiltration-of-moisture study were completed in June 1992. The second phase of 12 boreholes started on July 30, 1992.

During this reporting period, the staff attended two meetings of the NWTRB. The purpose of the first meeting, held on July 7-8, 1992, was to have DOE present its ongoing work to incorporate the Management and Operating (M&O) Contractor into the DOE HLW program. Representatives from the M&O Contractor made several

presentations on the organizational structure, application of systems engineering to the program, and engineering work being conducted in the areas of waste package design and thermal loading in the repository. Additionally, DOE staff gave several presentations on the effects of the recent earthquake, near Yucca Mountain, Nevada, on current and future site characterization work.

The topic of the second meeting, held on September 14-16, 1992, was structural geology and engineering. The meeting included presentations and discussions by contractors of DOE, USGS, and representatives of the State of Nevada, on the results of recent investigations of volcanism near the proposed repository site at Yucca Mountain. The discussions included aspects of the possible effects of volcanism at the site and an update of the probabilistic hazard studies. The NRC staff also made a presentation, giving the panel a regulatory perspective on the issue of volcanism at the Yucca Mountain site. Representatives of ACNW, the State of Nevada Legislative Committee, affected counties, and the news media also attended the panel meeting.

There were no specific interactions between DOE and EPA on issues concerning mixed HLW or the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, during this reporting period.

2. Early Implementation of a Quality Assurance (QA) Program

The previous Quarterly Progress Report noted that DOE stated its intention not to request NRC staff acceptance of the M&O Contractor Quality Assurance Program Description (QAPD) on the M&O Contractor QA program. At NRC's request, DOE provided a rationale for this decision in a letter dated June 29, 1992. The NRC staff evaluated the DOE rationale and notified DOE, in a letter dated July 28, 1992, that because of the significance of the M&O Contractor program, the same steps of review and acceptance of the QAPD and QA program that applied to the DOE HLW program participants should also be applied to the M&O Contractor program. The NRC staff is reviewing the M&O Contractor QAPD, which was transmitted to the NRC for information, and will provide DOE with comments resulting from its review. The staff will also observe DOE audits of the M&O Contractor, as it has done for other DOE HLW program participants. The staff recommended, in its July 28, 1992, letter that DOE should audit significant portions of the M&O Contractor's quality-affecting activities,

especially those that could affect site characterization activities, as early as possible.

During this reporting period, NRC and CNWRA QA staffs observed DOE Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM) audits of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories, and YMPO, and observed OCRWM surveillances of Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the M&O Contractor. NRC and CNWRA QA staffs observed an internal audit of the DOE Office of Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Vitrification Projects Division (EM-343), and EM-343 audits of the West Valley Demonstration Project and the Savannah River Defense Waste Processing Division. No findings were identified that would preclude DOE from continuing with surface-based site characterization or other quality-affecting activities.

The NRC staff held two meetings, in a series of periodic interactions with DOE, to discuss items of mutual interest related to the DOE HLW repository QA program, such as QA overview of core drilling and other site activities. The meetings were attended by representatives of the State of Nevada, the Edison Electric Institute, and affected units of local government.

3. Performance Assessment

The Sandia National Laboratories completed and published its report for DOE on a total system performance assessment (TSPA) for a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, during this reporting period. The report, entitled "TSPA 1991: An Initial Total System Performance Assessment for Yucca Mountain," responds to the staff's 1989 Site Characterization Analysis recommendation that DOE conduct periodic performance assessments to show progress in demonstrating compliance with 10 CFR Part 60. The staff intends to review DOE's report, in FY93, as part of Phase 3 of its own performance assessment development efforts. DOE also reported that a parallel effort to Sandia's in the area of performance assessment would be released near the end of 1992 by Pacific Northwest Laboratory.

4. Early Resolution of State and Tribal Concerns

The Deputy Director, Office of State Programs (OSP), met with Senator Thomas Hickey, Chairman of the Nevada Legislative Commission's Committee on High-Level

Radioactive Waste, on July 28, 1992, in Cincinnati, Ohio. The OSP Deputy Director and Senator Hickey principally discussed interface issues of interest to the Senator. Senator Hickey was in Cincinnati to chair the National Conference of State Legislatures' High-Level Waste/ Hazardous Materials Transportation Committee.

On August 11, 1992, the Director, HLWM, responded to the June 16, 1992, letters sent to the Chairman and the Deputy Director, HLWM, from Robert Loux, Director of the Nevada Nuclear Waste Projects Office. Mr. Loux's letters continued a dialogue between the staff and the State of Nevada regarding issue resolution during the prelicensing period. The HLWM response reconfirmed the staff's position on issue resolution during prelicensing consultation, stating that issue resolution at the staff level only means that there are no more questions and no more disagreements at a particular point in time. To that basic restatement of the staff position on issue resolution, the Director, HLWM, added that the staff has both the right and the responsibility to reopen any issue, or to request further information on any issue, at any time during the prelicensing period, when warranted by new information or analysis.

In a September 4, 1992, letter, Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner, Acting Director of the Nye County, Nevada, Nuclear Waste Project Office, raised several concerns related to the recent discussions that have been held among DOE, NRC, and the State, regarding issue resolution. In this letter, he stated three major concerns: opposition to the NRC staff "signing off" on various issues during the process of reviewing iterations of DOE's AO for a repository license application; DOE pressuring the NRC staff into providing inappropriate prelicensing guidance that would serve to shift responsibility for preparing the license application away from DOE; reduction of regulatory uncertainties in 10 CFR Part 60 was unnecessary because the rule is unambiguous as currently written, and the rule allows for flexibility. The staff is currently preparing a response to this letter that will be discussed in the next Quarterly Progress Report.

5. Rulemaking and Regulatory Guidance Development

The staff distributed the proposed rulemaking on "Design Basis Events for the Geologic Repository Operations Area," for interoffice review and concurrence, during this reporting period. The staff anticipates that

publication of the proposed rulemaking for public comment will occur approximately two months after it is forwarded to the Commission for consideration. The present date for submission to the Commission is November 1992.

The staff is currently preparing a paper discussing the staff's continued development of the draft regulatory guide "Topical Guidelines for the Licensing Support System" (LSS). The Commission set out the process that the staff was to follow in developing the topical guidelines in SECY-89-186, "Consolidation of the Commission's Rules of Practice in Order to Further Streamline the Licensing Process." This process involves revising draft topical guidelines, preparing a draft regulatory guide, and seeking input from the LSS Advisory Review Panel (LSSARP). The Commission was previously informed of the staff's progress in SECY-90-187, dated May 24, 1990. The staff has now considered several alternatives to resolving comments received from the LSSARP. The staff will present these alternatives, and its recommendation, to the Commission, in the paper which is currently being prepared.

After responding to the ACNW's programmatic comments and recommendations, the staff completed its final Staff Technical Position (STP) on "Geologic Repository Operations Area Underground Facility Design -- Thermal Loads," which will soon be published as NUREG-1466. This STP will provide DOE with a methodology acceptable to the staff for demonstrating compliance with the requirement for thermal loads design criteria specified in 10 CFR 60.133(i). The staff's position is that the DOE methodology for modeling thermal loads for the repository should include evaluation and development of appropriately coupled models to account for the thermal, mechanical, hydrological, and chemical processes that are induced by repository-generated thermal loads.

Also during this reporting period, the final STP on "Investigations to Identify Fault Displacement Hazards and Seismic Hazards at a Geologic Repository" was published as NUREG-1451, in July 1992. This STP provides guidance to DOE on acceptable geologic repository investigations that can be used to identify fault displacement and seismic hazards.

Drafts of portions of EPA's technical support for the HLW standards were received and reviewed, and comments were provided to EPA during this reporting period. Complete drafts of EPA's technical support documents are expected in October or November 1992. The staff will

advise the Commission of the adequacy of EPA's technical support, after EPA's documents have been reviewed.

Finally, the NRC staff reviewed and commented to EPA on draft reports of seven tasks undertaken by DOE to provide technical support to EPA for its HLW standards. These tasks were reviewed by the National Academy of Science's Board on Radioactive Waste Management, in a public meeting held on September 23-24, 1992. The comments from the board are expected in late October or November 1992.

The resolution of regulatory and institutional uncertainties is progressing over a broad area. Of particular importance, the "Design Basis Event" rulemaking, previously noted, is near completion and will resolve the identified regulatory uncertainty. The staff continues working towards resolution of two of the most significant uncertainties, which deal with the relationship of the siting criteria, listed as favorable and potentially adverse conditions in 10 CFR 60.122, and the performance objectives of 10 CFR 60.112 and 113. The staff originally categorized these uncertainties as requiring further analysis, in order to determine an appropriate uncertainty reduction method. This process of further analysis has led the staff to determine that these uncertainties (described as "need for criteria for 'adequately evaluated,'" and, "need for criteria for 'adequately investigated'") can best be resolved through a major rulemaking. This rulemaking was outlined in a June 11, 1992, memorandum to the Commission, "Resolution of the Regulatory Uncertainties Related to the Relationship of the High-Level Waste Repository Regulations' Siting Criteria and the Performance Objectives," and will address these two uncertainties. Additionally, a "Staff Technical Position on Investigations to Identify Fault Displacement Hazards and Seismic Hazards at a Geologic Repository" (NUREG-1451), has been published, and in part, addresses the "geologic setting" uncertainties, and the "use of the phrase 'Quaternary Period.'"

6. Monitored Retrievable Storage Facility (MRS)

During this reporting period, the staff forwarded to DOE comments on DOE's "Monitored Retrievable Storage Facility Annotated Outline Skeleton Text for the Preparation of a License Application" (MRS AO). A revision to the MRS AO, dated August 31, 1992, was received and is under review by CNWRA. Comments are anticipated to be sent to DOE in November 1992. Two

iterations per year of the MRS AO are now anticipated. Also, in August 1992, the staff held two meetings with DOE. On August 19, 1992, a meeting was held to discuss the safeguards licensing process and security issues related to independent spent fuel storage installations (ISFSIs) and an MRS. The second meeting took place on August 27, 1992, where DOE provided the staff with an update on the status of MRS siting and design activities.

A number of groups have expressed interest to DOE in hosting an MRS site. Each group has applied for and received $100,000 in Phase I grants to study the feasibility of hosting an MRS. There are currently eight active Phase I applicants: the Mescalero Apache Tribe (NM); Yakima Indian Nation (WA); Prairie Island Indian Nation (MN); Skull Valley Goshute Tribe (UT); San Juan County (UT); Ft. McDermitt Indian Reservation (OR/NV); Eastern Shawnee (OK); and the Ponca Tribe (OK). DOE has four Phase I applications under review: Apache County (AZ); Alabama-Quassarte Tribe (OK); Lower Brule Sioux (SD); and the Apache Development Authority (OK). Additionally, there are nine groups in a non-active status. Fremont County, Wyoming, completed its Phase I study relating to siting of an MRS and wanted to proceed to the next step, Phase IIa. However, on August 21, 1992, in a letter addressed to the Fremont County Commissioners, Governor Mike Sullivan decided to halt county efforts to continue the process of seeking Phase IIa grant funding, thereby eliminating Fremont County as a potential host MRS site. The Mescalero Apache Indian Tribal Council of Mescalero, New Mexico, is the only group to have received $200,000 for the first of a two-part Phase II grant from DOE. The Mescalero Apache Indian Tribal Council is using the funding to continue its fact-finding studies and public information efforts. The deadline for applying for Phase II grants was to have expired on September 30, 1992; however, DOE is considering extending the filing deadline to March 31, 1993.

7. Spent Fuel Storage and Transportation System Compatibility

There were no significant design developments in spent fuel storage and transportation system compatibility since the October 1991 Commission Paper, "U.S. Department of Energy and Industry Progress in Developing Cask Designs to Achieve Compatibility for Dry Storage and Transportation Purposes" (SECY-91-313). However, the staff understands that the Sacramento Municipal

Utility District (SMUD) is considering the selection of the standardized NUHOMS-24P spent fuel storage design as part of a DOE cooperative program to demonstrate the licensing of a dual-purpose storage/ transport system for its Rancho Seco ISFSI. A meeting was held with SMUD in July to discuss potential licensing issues, and a revised application is expected later this fall.

8. Transportation

There have been no significant developments in transportation during this reporting period.

9. Research

During this reporting period, substantial progress was made in the following areas: completion of the Task I report for the first volcanism project at CNWRA; and revision of the HLW Research Program Plan, in cooperation with NMSS.

10. Nuclear Waste Negotiator

NRC continues to maintain a cooperative relationship with the Nuclear Waste Negotiator and his staff. Recently, NRC staff provided copies of the following publications, upon request of the Negotiator's Washington, D.C., office, for distribution to MRS volunteers: "Transporting Spent Fuel - Protection Provided Against Severe Highway and Railroad Accidents" (NUREG/BR-0111); and "Public Information Circular for Shipments of Irradiated Reactor Fuel" (NUREG-0725, Rev. 7).

Conclusion: During this reporting period, NRC and DOE continued to make progress in addressing and working towards resolving issues at the staff level. Additionally, the proposed rulemaking on "Design Basis Events for the Geologic Repository Operations Area" is scheduled to be forwarded, in November 1992, to the Commission for consideration. The staff is also currently preparing a Commission Paper recommending proposed language for the Draft Regulatory Guide, "Topical Guidelines for the Licensing Support System."

Coordination: The Office of the General Counsel has reviewed this paper and has no legal objection.

James M. Taylor
Executive Director
for Operations

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