

Mr. Jerome D. Saltzman Director  
 Office of External Relations  
 U.S. Department of Energy  
 Forrestal Building, RW 5  
 Washington, D.C. 20585

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JAN 07 1994

Dear Mr. Saltzman:

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S (DOE'S) REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON DRAFT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY

As you requested in your letter of December 17, 1993, we reviewed DOE'S draft description of a new public involvement policy and have the following comments:

- We support the very worthwhile goal of the new policy, to increase public involvement in DOE decision-making on civilian high-level radioactive waste management activities.
- We view the new policy as consistent with the existing NRC/DOE procedural agreement and the agreement's related objectives of adequate information flow between NRC and DOE, timely NRC involvement in DOE's activities of a regulatory interest, early identification of potential licensing issues, and participation in NRC/DOE prelicensing consultations by states, Indian Tribes, affected units of local government and the public. Such involvement is and will continue to be an essential element of the ongoing NRC/DOE technical interchange process.
- As in the past, we encourage immediate steps by DOE to implement the data base described in Critical Policy Element 5, to make real-time information available through telephone and computer access points.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the draft public involvement policy. Should you have follow-up questions or comments, please contact Bill Reamer of my staff (301-504-3391).

Sincerely,

Original signed by  
 Robert M. Bernero

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

cc: Mr. Allen Benson

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