



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

OCT 29 1991

Mr. John J. Linehan, Acting Director
Repository Licensing and Quality
Assurance Project Directorate
Division of High-Level Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Mr. Linehan:

For your information, the following study plans are considered a high priority since these studies will be either (1) supporting specific surface-based activities that the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) would like to begin in fiscal year 1992, or (2) supporting data acquisition to be used as input for Title II design of the Exploratory Studies Facility:

1. Study Plan 8.3.1.14.2, "Studies to Provide Soil and Rock Properties for Potential Locations of Surface Facilities and Subsurface Access Facilities";
2. Study Plan 8.3.1.2.2.3, "Characterization of the Percolation in the Unsaturated Zone, Surface-Based Study"; and
3. Study Plan 8.3.1.5.1.4, "Analysis of the Paleoenvironmental History of the Yucca Mountain Region."

The first study plan (8.3.1.14.2) was recently sent to the NRC via a DOE transmittal letter dated October 16, 1991 (Roberts to Linehan). Of the three study plans identified, 8.3.1.14.2 has the highest priority for review. Enclosure 2 of your letter of September 30, 1991 (Linehan to Shelor) indicates that NRC Phase 1 reviews are scheduled to be completed for Study Plan 8.3.1.2.2.3 on October 9, 1991, and for Study Plan 8.3.1.5.1.4 on October 25, 1991. DOE acknowledges NRC's review efforts in this regard.

Although the NRC's review plan for study plans provides for a three-month phase 1 review (start-work review), we request that the NRC staff please expedite its review of these plans to the extent that they are able. A timely receipt of NRC comments for the activities at issue, prior to assembly of test planning packages, is the optimal window for acting on potential changes to study plans advocated in NRC comments.

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Your overall assistance and cooperation in the study plan review process is appreciated. Should you have any questions, please contact Sharon Skuchko of my office at (202) 586-4590.

Sincerely,



John P. Roberts
Acting Associate Director for
Systems and Compliance
Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management

cc:

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