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 Office of Licensing and Regulatory Compliance  
 U.S. Department of Energy  
 Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management  
 Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office  
 P.O. Box 30307  
 North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

August 17, 1999

**SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY COMMENTS ON U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION ISSUE RESOLUTION STATUS REPORT ON REPOSITORY DESIGN AND THERMAL-MECHANICAL EFFECTS KEY TECHNICAL ISSUE REV. 1**

Dear Mr. Brocoum:

This letter acknowledges your August 10, 1999, letter conveying the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) comments on the Repository Design and Thermal-Mechanical Effects (RDTME) Issue Resolution Status Report (IRSR). There are three comments in your letter: one on the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission subissue of design control process; the second on DOE's concept of backfill in the emplacement drifts; and the third on DOE's latest position on the potential use of concrete for lining the emplacement drifts. The staff has noted the three comments and will consider them appropriately in the next revision of the RDTME IRSR, which is currently in progress.

We appreciate your efforts to keep abreast with the staff IRSR revisions. We, too, support your views on the need for developing a common understanding of key technical issues during the pre-licensing consultations between the two agencies. In the near future, when we issue the RDTME IRSR, we will convey to you how your specific comments were considered in the revision. In the meantime, if you have any questions related to the RDTME IRSR, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Mysore Nataraja of my staff at (301) 415-6695, or at <msn1@nrc.gov>.

Sincerely,

[Original signed by:]

C. William Reamer, Chief  
 High-Level Waste and Performance  
 Assessment Branch  
 Division of Waste Management  
 Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
 and Safeguards

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