

May 24, 1999

Mr. Les W. Bradshaw
Department Manager
Nye County, Nevada
Department of Natural Resources and Federal Facilities
1210 E. Basin Road, Ste. #6
Pahrump, Nevada 89048

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S VIABILITY ASSESSMENT

Dear Mr. Bradshaw:

This responds to your April 13, 1999, letter to Carl J. Paperiello, of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. We appreciate receiving a copy of Nye County's review of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Viability Assessment (VA).

We also appreciate receiving Nye County's comments on our review of the VA. As you recognized in your letter, we focused our comments on significant areas that would help facilitate DOE's development of a complete and high-quality license application. We have other, more detailed comments in the areas not included in our initial review. We plan to present the more detailed comments, and address the considerations in your review of the VA in updates to our Issue Resolution Status Reports (IRSRs).

We commend you for the expeditious preparation and dissemination of the Phase I - Fiscal Year 1999 Data Package of the Nye County Early Warning Drilling Program. We are currently examining the new saturated zone data and will provide an analysis in the next update of the Unsaturated and Saturated Flow Under Isothermal Conditions (USFIC) IRSR. We are pleased to hear the proposed alluvial tracer test may be conducted. The adequacy of the saturated zone flow and transport characterization will be evaluated in our updates to the USFIC IRSR.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact Jeff Ciocco, of my staff, at (301) 415-6391, or JAC3 @NRC.gov.

Sincerely,
[Original signed by:]
C.W. Reamer, Chief
High-Level Waste & Performance
Assessment Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

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wm-11

cc: See attached list

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SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S VIABILITY ASSESSMENT

Dear Mr. Bradshaw:

Thank you for taking the time to review our initial comments on the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Viability Assessment (VA). As you recognized in your letter, we focused our comments on significant areas that would help facilitate DOE's development of a complete and high-quality license application. We have other comments in the areas not included in our initial review. These comments, as well as your review of the VA, will be addressed in updates to the Issue Resolution Status Reports (IRSRs).

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