



ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION GROUP

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

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December 19, 1990

Mr. Robert E. Browning
Director
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Division of Waste Management
Mail Stop 623-SS
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Mr. Browning

Enclosed please find a copy of the EEG report, "Preoperational Radiation Surveillance of the WIPP Project During 1989," EEG-47, by Jim W. Kenney and Sally C. Ballard, December 1990. The report discusses the EEG preoperational monitoring program which documents existing concentrations and lower limits of detection associated with selected radionuclides in the area of WIPP.

This program was started by EEG in 1985 to obtain measurements of background radioactivity in the environs of WIPP prior to beginning operations with transuranic radioactive waste in order to obtain a frame of reference for any changes associated with WIPP operations. The results indicate that EEG data are generally consistent with similar data obtained by DOE during the preoperational phase of WIPP. Analyses of air particulates frequently indicated a detectable presence of naturally occurring Ra-226, Ra-228, Th-228, Th-230, and Th-232. Radionuclide data from the analyses of water samples were consistent with other published findings for water from this area.

Earlier results were published in January 1990 in EEG-43.

Sincerely,


Robert H. Neill
Director

Enclosure

JK:RHN:ss:jc

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Providing an independent technical analysis of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP),
a federal transuranic nuclear waste repository.

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