

OCT 08 1992

Mr. John P. Roberts, Acting Associate Director
for Systems and Compliance
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
U. S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Mr. Roberts:

SUBJECT: OBSERVATION OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AUDIT OF THE SAVANNAH
RIVER SITE DEFENSE WASTE PROCESSING DIVISION

This letter transmits the NRC staff comments resulting from its observation of the September 14-18, 1992, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Environmental Restoration and Waste Management, Vitrification Projects Division (EM-343) quality assurance (QA) audit (No. 92EA-SR-AU-04) of the Savannah River Site Defense Waste Processing Division (DWPD). C. Morrell of CER Corporation represented the DOE Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management as an observer. The State of Nevada declined to send a representative to observe this audit.

The DWPD is responsible to process high-level liquid radioactive waste into a slurry form, melt it, mix it with a glass frit and pour this mixed radioactive waste and frit into stainless steel canisters. These canisters will be capped and welded and stored temporarily until a permanent repository is available. DWDP is currently scheduled to begin cold chemical runs at the Defense Waste Processing Facility before January 1993. DOE will perform an Operational Readiness Review prior to the start of cold chemical runs.

The objective of the EM-343 QA audit was to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of implementation of the DWPD and Westinghouse Savannah River Company (WSRC) QA programs applicable to the DWPF. The audit team consisted of an Audit Team Leader and twelve auditors. The team did not include any technical specialists, and no evaluation was made of the technical adequacy of work products.

Detailed audit checklists, identifying QA program requirements and covering all 18 programmatic elements of the DWPD and WSRC QA programs, were utilized throughout the audit. In addition, previous audit findings were factored into this audit to determine the extent to which timely and effective resolutions were accomplished.

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Overall, the audit team was well qualified and interacted effectively and professionally with the DOE and WSRC personnel. The audit team was divided into four sub-teams, and the logistics in managing these sub-teams and in identifying and tracking findings appeared acceptable.

The audit team identified six deficiencies and thirteen observations, none of which was considered serious and all of which could be corrected with relative ease. Implementation of the programmatic element "Design Control" was found to be ineffective due to on-going corrective actions related to configuration control. The ultimate quality of the DWPF design will not be affected since significant remedial actions are underway to bring the design and as-built drawings into an acceptable state. No hot runs of the DWPF will be made until quality-affecting deficiencies identified by this and other reviews are corrected. EM-343 is planning a future audit to verify corrective actions for this audit and review other areas as appropriate.

The NRC staff has determined that the audit was effective and fulfilled the required audit scope and objectives described in the audit plan. The NRC staff agrees with the audit team findings that implementation of the DWPD and WSRC QA programs was acceptable with the exception of the programmatic element "Design Control."

Sincerely,

JS

Joseph J. Holonich, Director
Repository Licensing and Quality Assurance
Project Directorate
Division of High-Level Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

- cc: R. Loux, State of Nevada
- T. J. Hickey, Nevada Legislative Committee
- C. Gertz, DOE/NV
- M. Murphy, Nye County, NV
- M. Baughman, Lincoln County, NV
- D. Bechtel, Clark County, NV
- D. Weigel, GAO
- P. Niedzielski-Eichner, Nye County, NV
- B. Mettam, Inyo County, CA
- V. Poe, Mineral County, NV
- F. Sperry, White Pine County, NV
- R. Williams, Lander County, NV
- P. Goicoechea, Eureka County, NV
- L. Vaughan II, Esmeralda County, NV
- C. Shank, Churchill County, NV
- E. Holstein, Nye County, NV

OFC:	HLPD <i>JS</i>	:HLPD <i>JS</i>	:HLPD <i>JS</i>	:	:	:
NAME:	JGilray <i>JS</i>	:KHooks <i>JS</i>	:JHolonich <i>JS</i>	:	:	:
Date:	10/17/92	:10/17/92	:10/17/92	:	:	:

Mr. John P. Roberts

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SUBJECT: OBSERVATION AUDIT OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, SAVANNAH RIVER
DEFENSE WASTE PROCESSING DIVISION

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