

Mr. Ralph Stein, Associate Director
for Systems Integration and Regulations
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
U. S. Department of Energy, RW 30
Washington, D.C. 20545

MAK 16 1990

Dear Mr. Stein:

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION (NRC)
APPROVAL OF UNITED STATES GEOLOGIC SURVEY (USGS) QUALITY
ASSURANCE (QA) PROGRAM

Your letter of March 12, 1990, to Mr. Robert Browning, Director of the NRC Division of High-Level Waste Management, stated the Department of Energy's (DOE's) position that "...the USGS QA program is acceptable to initiate activities supporting new site characterization." It also requested acceptance by the NRC staff of the QA program at the USGS. The purpose of this letter is to respond to your request.

As indicated in my letter to you of December 15, 1989, which transmitted our observation audit report of DOE's Audit No. 894 of the USGS, we believe that "...the USGS QA program has adequate controls in place to continue the work and allow implementation of their QA program." Implementation in the near term will involve activities such as the development of study plans and technical procedures (i.e. activities which support new site characterization). Such activities will allow DOE to demonstrate its ability to implement its QA program prior to start of any new field activities.

Our acceptance of the QA program for new site characterization work (i.e. data collection, excavation of trenches, drilling new boreholes, etc.), thus resolving the NRC QA objection in the Site Characterization Analysis, can occur only after DOE and USGS have demonstrated the ability to implement the QA program adequately.

If you have any questions concerning our position, please contact Mark Delligatti of my staff on extension 492-0430.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

John J. Linehan, Director
Repository Licensing and Quality
Assurance Project Directorate
Division of High-Level Waste Management

cc: R. Loux, State of Nevada
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