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NOV 24 1989

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

Dear Mr. Stein:

On June 30, 1989 the DOE transmitted two study plans, "Characterization of the Yucca Mountain Quaternary Regional Hydrology" (Study Plan 8.3.1.5.2.1) and "Evaluating the Location and Recency of Faulting Near Prospective Surface Facilities" (Study Plan 8.3.1.17.4.2), to NRC for review and comment. The NRC has completed its Acceptance Reviews and Start-Work Reviews of those documents using the draft NRC staff Study Plan Review Plan (DSPRP), which was provided to DOE on January 15, 1988, and which was discussed in part during the December 15, 1988 NRC-DOE Meeting on Study Plans.

The result of both Acceptance Reviews was that the material submitted was considered substantively consistent with the agreement on content resulting from the NRC-DOE agreements made at the May 7-8, 1986 meeting on Level of Detail for Site Characterization Plans and Study Plans. In addition, the references for the study plans either have been provided to NRC or are readily available in the public domain. Hence, both study plans were found acceptable for further review.

The one qualification on the acceptance of these two study plans is that inasmuch as DOE submitted material on only three of the five activities in Study Plan 8.3.1.5.2.1, and indicated that Activities on regional paleoflood evaluation (8.3.1.5.2.1.1) and on Quaternary unsaturated-zone hydrochemical analysis (8.3.1.5.2.1.2) would be included in a subsequent revision to the study plan, the staff's acceptance of that study plan applies only to the three activities that were submitted for review.

The purpose of the NRC's Start-Work Review is to identify concerns with studies, tests, or analyses that if started could cause significant and irreparable adverse effects on the site, the site characterization program, or the eventual usability of the data for licensing. Such concerns would constitute objections, as that term has been used in earlier NRC staff reviews of DOE's documents related to site characterization (Consultation Draft Site Characterization Plan (CDSCP) and Site Characterization Plan (SCP) for the Yucca Mountain site). The NRC staff Start-Work Reviews of the two study plans identified no objections with any of the activities proposed.

Selected study plans are to receive a third level of review, called a Detailed Technical Review, based on the potential importance of the study plan relative to NRC licensing concerns. We have decided to proceed with Detailed Technical Reviews of both study plans and will provide DOE with staff comments as soon as those reviews are completed.

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At the December 15, 1988 Study Plan Meeting, NRC and DOE agreed that upon request DOE would provide NRC with particular procedures referenced in a study plan that has been submitted for review. We request that DOE provide us with a controlled copy of Sandia Experimental Procedure EP-0001 to assist us in our Detailed Technical Review of Study Plan 8.3.1.17.4.2. Receipt of this document in a timely manner will enable the staff to complete its review of that study plan expeditiously.

If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact King Stablein (FTS 492-0446) of my staff.

Sincerely,

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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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