



- DCC
- QCUW Fm
DOE 9/19

**AGENCY FOR NUCLEAR PROJECTS
NUCLEAR WASTE PROJECT OFFICE**

Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710
Telephone: (702) 687-3744
Fax: (702) 687-5277

September 11, 1990

Dr. John Bartlett
Director, Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Dr. Bartlett:

I am writing to you in regard to an invitation we have received from Golder Associates Inc. (GAI) to attend and observe a "Workshop on Yucca Mountain Integrated Performance Model", to be held September 19 - 21, 1990, in Redmond, Washington.

In its August 29, 1990 letter, GAI speaks to its development of a performance assessment model, through this and additional workshops, that will be the "central component in a system to optimize the evaluation of the suitability of the Yucca Mountain site." They further point out that this work is being done at your request, as OCRWM Director, "and is intended to provide an independent evaluation which will complement the studies currently underway within the Yucca Mountain Project."

From Nevada's perspective, this initiative, as laid out in the accompanying Project Description, appears in most part to be similar or identical to efforts recently initiated within the Yucca Mountain Program, as well as to other efforts external to the Program. What is not apparent is the functional relationship of this GAI project to the ongoing work and the proposed revision process for the Mission Plan. And, how is the complete package responsive to the requirements of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, as amended, and the Secretary of Energy's finding in his 60-Day Report to Congress that the program cannot be effectively executed in its present form?

This lack of clarity in programmatic direction is especially crucial since the underpinnings of the current candidate site evaluation program are under legal challenge by Nevada, and are of

9009250077 900911
PDR WASTE PDC
WM-11

9001398

FULL TEXT ASCII SCAN

102.3
WM-11
NH03

critical concern to other parties, including the nuclear utilities and various state and public interest groups.

I believe that prior to initiation of projects such as that of GAI, the Department must first provide Nevada and other interested parties with a comprehensive briefing as to how all of these current and planned efforts combine to meet some goal that is consistent with the law and commitments made by you and the Secretary. As we have discussed previously, such an explanation is one of the several prerequisites upon which our participation in the individual component efforts is dependent.

I have some specific concerns regarding the GAI Project in relation to overall program planning and direction. First, it does not appear that the intent here is to start from scratch and see if an effective alternative approach to the ongoing work emerges. Instead, it seems to have most, if not all of the same objectives and attributes of the currently developing performance assessment approach, with the significant additional task of developing a set of site suitability criteria (Sec. 3) for Yucca Mountain which (different from the SCP) may, or may not be at significant variance with existing law and regulations. Further, the proposed Development of Total System Framework (Sec. 4.2) seems to rely on application of a new layer of expert judgement over a large body of work that, in its current form, is the product of an identical expert judgement process, even down to the inclusion of some of the same "experts".

If you will recall our recent conversation on the overall approach to evaluation of whether Yucca Mountain should continue to be pursued as a candidate repository site, I believe you will understand my confusion and concern when I received the GAI letter and project description. The initiation of this effort only further confirms our major observations about the Yucca Mountain Program implementation, which I and my staff pointed out are a significant part of the basis of the State's position about whether characterization work should proceed at Yucca Mountain. These observations include:

- The underlying directive of the DOE Guidelines (10 CFR Part 960) to use conservative assumptions has been completely set aside by DOE (see Sec. 4.5 in CIA Project Description);

- Site suitability, according to DOE, is solely a performance based determination in which even severely adverse site conditions are intended to be mitigated either by regulatory modifications or engineering means, or both;

- There is no intent by DOE to make an early and ongoing rigorous evaluation of known or likely to exist site characteristics against the Disqualifying Conditions of the Guidelines (10 CFR Part 960);

- The DOE considers its in-house technical knowledge and determinations about the site sufficient to go forward with site characterization plans, site evaluations, and performance assessments without consideration of the substantive merits, and development of technical responses to the State of Nevada's extensive technical comments on the DOE's Draft Environmental Assessment for Yucca Mountain, the Consultation Draft Site Characterization Plan, and the Site Characterization Plan, even though it is acknowledged that there are significant and substantial differences in technical interpretations in some critical areas.

As I suggested to you when we last met, I believe the DOE's continued programmatic pursuit of increasingly sophisticated methodologies for determining site "suitability" is fundamentally misguided in its current objectives. The GAI project, as I have pointed out here, does not suggest any recognition of this problem, and certainly is premature if this matter is intended to be resolved.

If you have any questions or comments about the views presented here, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely,



Robert R. Loux
Executive Director

encl. (1)
cc: Ian Miller, GAI

RRL:cs



Golder Associates Inc.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

August 29, 1990

Our ref: 903-1104

Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects
Capital Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710

ATTENTION: Mr. Carl Johnson

RE: WORKSHOP ON YUCCA MTN. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MODEL

Dear Mr. Johnson:

You are invited to attend and observe a two-plus day workshop to be held in Redmond, Washington (near Seattle) beginning at 8 AM September 19, 1990, and ending at noon on September 21. The purpose of the workshop will be to establish the conceptual framework of a preliminary integrated performance assessment model for the Yucca Mountain site. A limited number of attendees are being invited, with the intent of having expert representation for all of the major technical issues which will arise, as well as representing all of the major organizations involved. A preliminary list of invitees is included.

The performance assessment model being developed by Golder Associates will be the central component in a system to optimize the evaluation of the suitability of the Yucca Mountain site. The primary focus of the program will be on the technical issues of suitability, as opposed to institutional or procedural ones. The development of this system is being carried out at the request of the Director of the OCRWM, and it is intended to provide an independent evaluation which will complement the studies currently underway within the Yucca Mountain Project.

We have enclosed a Project Description, which briefly summarizes the philosophy and methodology of our project. This includes a more complete discussion of the purpose and goals of this and subsequent workshops (Section 2.2).

RECEIVED

AUG 31 1990

NUCLEAR WASTE PROJECT OFFICE

August 29, 1990

6

903-1104

I hope that you will be able to attend the workshop. Please contact either myself or Rick Kossik at (206) 883-0777 to indicate whether you plan to attend. If you are unable to attend, you may wish to suggest an alternative attendee. A block of rooms have been reserved at the Best Western Greenwood Inn in Bellevue, Washington. Please call (206) 455-9444 to confirm a reservation.

Sincerely,

GOLDER ASSOCIATES INC.

Rick Kossik for

Ian Miller
Principal

IM/kew

Preliminary List of Invitees:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| DOE: | Tom Isaacs, Russ Dyer |
| EPRI: | Bob Shaw |
| LANL: | Bruce Crowe, Julie Canapa |
| LBL: | Karsten Pruess, Chin-Fu Tsang |
| LLNL: | Dwayne Chestnut, Bill O'Connell, Les Jardine |
| NAS: | Peter Myers |
| NRC: | Norm Eisenberg |
| PNL: | Abe Van Luick, Mick Apted |
| RE/SPEC: | Bill Coons, John Osnes |
| SAIC: | U-Sun Park |
| SNL: | Paul Kaplan, Felton Bingham, Scott Simanock |
| TRE: | Leon Reiter, Pat Domenico |
| UCB: | Thom Figford |
| USGS: | Bill Wilson, Alan Flint |
| Weston: | Larry Rickertson |