

MAY 01 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: U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION USE OF A VIDEO CAMERA TO RECORD
SITE CHARACTERIZATION ACTIVITIES AT THE YUCCA MOUNTAIN SITE

This is in response to your letter dated March 26, 1992, in which the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) discussed establishment of a protocol between DOE and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission with respect to NRC staff's use of a video camera to record site characterization activities at the Yucca Mountain site. In that letter, DOE raised a concern with the staff's request to videotape on-going site characterization activities. Particularly, DOE did not believe it was appropriate for the staff to do such videotaping. However, it did agree to evaluate requests to videotape such activities, and provide the staff with videotapes. Based on its review of the DOE request, and its offer to provide videotape in response to case-by-case requests, the NRC staff will not videotape personnel performing site characterization activities, but will provide DOE with requests for videotape records of these activities on a case-by-case basis. It is anticipated that the NRC on-site representatives will be permitted to accompany the DOE organization during the videotaping, although this is not always expected to be the case.

With respect to the staff being allowed to videotape geologic features or excavations where specific geologic features of interest may be exposed, DOE's letter was unclear. In the past, NRC geoscientists have photographed geologic features at the Yucca Mountain site, while abiding by the regulations of the Nevada Test Site. Based on discussions between the NRC and DOE staffs, it is our understanding that this practice would be expanded for NRC staff to videotape geologic features and excavations, but not to videotape people performing site activities. Therefore, the staff believes that the statement in the letter requiring it to request all taping was inadvertently made, and we will plan to only videotape objects and features in the future.

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If you have any questions, please contact Charlotte Abrams of my staff at (301) 504-3403/FTS 964-3403.

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

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