

APR 1, 1993

Mr. Dwight E. Shelor, Associate Director for  
Systems and Compliance  
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Mr. Shelor:

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE) STUDY PLAN "WATER MOVEMENT TEST"

On February 22, 1993, DOE transmitted the study plan, "Water Movement Test" (Study Plan 8.3.1.2.2.2) to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission for review and comment. NRC has completed its review of this document using the Review Plan for NRC Staff Review of DOE Study Plans, Revision 2 (March 10, 1993). The material submitted in the study plan was considered to be consistent, to the extent possible at this time, with the revised NRC-DOE "Level of Detail Agreement and Review Process for Study Plans" (Shelor to Holonich, March 22, 1993).

A major purpose of the 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 and the Site Characterization Plan for the Yucca Mountain site). It does not appear that the conduct of the activities described in this study plan will have adverse impacts on repository performance and the review of this study plan identified no objections with any of the activities proposed.

The NRC staff has no detailed technical comments related to this study plan at this time. Because of the prototype nature of the work described in the study plan and the importance of the study plan to provide key information concerning groundwater travel in the unsaturated zone, the NRC staff will closely track the progress of the work described and may offer detailed comments at a later date.

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Mr. Dwight E. Shelor

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If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact Charlotte Abrams (301) 504-3403 of my staff.

Sincerely,

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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  
S. Bradhurst, Nye County, NV  
M. Baughman, Lincoln County, NV  
D. Bechtel, Clark County, NV  
D. Weigel, GAO  
P. Niedzielski-Eichner, Nye County, NV  
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