

APR 15 1993

Mr. Dwight 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 STUDY PLAN "IN SITU DESIGN VERIFICATION"

On February 17, 1993, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) transmitted the study plan, "In Situ Design Verification" (Study Plan 8.3.1.15.1.8) 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 does not plan to provide DOE with detailed technical comments related to the subject study plan at this time. In its letter of transmittal for the study plan, DOE provided information relative to Site Characterization Analysis Comments 4 and 56. The staff believes that the material presented by DOE in the study plan demonstrates progress toward the resolution of these comments. Because the comments are concerned with issues that cannot be fully addressed in this study plan, we will continue to track these comments as open items until their resolution.

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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,

/s/

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. Hickey, Nevada Legislative Committee
- C. Gertz, DOE/NV
- M. Murphy, Nye County, NV
- M. Baughman, Lincoln County, NV
- D. Bechtel, Clark County, NV
- D. Weigel, GAO
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