



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

January 09, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Robert E. Browning, Director
Division of Waste Management

FROM: F. Robert Cook, Senior On-Site Licensing Representative
Basalt Waste Isolation Project (BWIP)

SUBJECT: BWIP SITE REPORT FOR WEEKS OF DECEMBER 18, 25, 1983 and
JANUARY 1, 1984

1. During the weeks of December 18 and 25, 1983 I have nothing to report since I was on leave. The items discussed below cover my reviews during the week of January 01, 1984.

2. Reviews of the agenda and planning for the forth coming Geochemistry Workshop and the Hydrology review session respectively were accomplished. I raised the question of public notification of these respective activities to be conducted by NRC representatives at the BWIP Site with cognizant members of the Staff. The DOE public notification for the Geochemistry workshop was a posting of an agenda on the side of a bookshelf in the RHO Science Center reading area. This posting was in such a location that it would not be readily noticed by people entering the Science Center. (No member of the public attended the opening session of the Geochemistry Workshop on January 09, 1984). NRC should consider separate public notification of meetings the staff attends to assure public awareness for the future. In the context discussed above I distinguish the public from State and Indian Nation representatives, both of which were in attendance at the January 09, 1984 Geochemistry meeting and received by special distribution from DOE notification of these NRC/RHO/DOE meetings and reviews.

In reviewing the potential public involvement in the NRC hydrology data review session I learned that DOE does not consider this session a technical meeting in the terms used in the NRC/DOE (Morgan/Davis) agreement of last year. DOE also informed me that the public would not be notified of this activity since they could not attend as it would be conducted primarily on-site where clearance/badging was required. When I questioned whether hydrology data would always be retained on-site so that routine public review would not be possible, DOE (Mecca) indicated that this would not be the case and that DOE would consider identifying planning to make BWIP data available to the public. He indicated they (DOE) would take this up in their BWIP public status meeting planned for the end of January 1984. I will attend this meeting and report my observations on this item in the future.

3. Pacific Northwest Laboratory's recent (November 1983) (PNL) review of BWIP planning identified technical areas for investigation by BWIP. One such area is the question of the existence of useful natural resources at the repository site. To my knowledge NRC has not addressed this issue in the SCA or other written documents. I recommend staff review BWIP plans for assessing natural resources, if they have any. This should include consideration of water

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resources for irrigation, coal, oil and natural gas, as well as, potential mineral resources. Data exists from deep wells and other natural gas recovery activities in and around the Pasco Basin which are pertinent to the question of the potential availability of gas, oil, and coal in the site. The question of ground water as a resource is obvious and needs to be assessed by the Staff. Assessment methodologies should be made available to DOE in a manner analogous to the way we provide our methodologies in other technical areas.

4. PNL has recently completed a document which addresses the hydrochemical characterization of the Hanford Site. I will attempt to obtain a copy of this document for the Staff.

5. The USGS is shortly (February 1984) going to publish data from their sodium program which looks at increasing sodium levels in ground water, apparently as a result of extensive ground water pumping in the Columbia Plateau region. Understanding the source of the sodium may provide understanding of ground water systems in the Columbia Basin. Tom Early of the RHO staff is familiar with the USGS work and would be a source for further information in the BWIP project. Gill Bordelson at USGS, Tacoma, is in charge of the project for that office.

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F. Robert Cook
Sr. On-Site Licensing Rep., BWIP

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