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November 22, 1983

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

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

SUBJECT: BWIP Site Report For Week of November 14, 1983

1. BWIP recently initiated an extensive test program for investigating interactions among waste package materials, including radioactive materials and actual waste forms. A copy of planned testing is attached. It should be helpful to the staff in preparing for the waste package workshop in February, 1985.

2. An information meeting was conducted by DOE on November 17, 1983 for Indian groups--the Yakimas and the Umatillas-- and the State of Washington concerning activities of the Hydrology Working Group. The following are items noted at the meeting: (Minutes are being prepared by RHO.)

a. Mr. Hovis (Yakimas) requested information concerning bromide concentrations in the ground water. RHO (Hunt) indicated the available data on bromide levels would be provided.

b. USGS (Meyer) described the history of the Working Group's activities (his presentation took about 1.5 hours). He highlighted the various issues which the group is trying to resolve and summarized positions taken in the past by the group participants (PNL, RHO and USGS). He explained the reasons for all the positions which the USGS has taken to date. These differences described by Meyer were those identified in the USGS letter to Morgan several months ago.

c. Meyer noted it would be desirable to drill along the boundaries of the Pasco Basin to investigate the hydrology of the Basin, however, he added that such extensive drilling would be impractical. The alternative has been to enlarge the area of interest to eliminate the need for determining the conditions at the Pasco Basin boundaries.

d. One of the differences discussed by Meyer concerned the discharge location for groundwater in the Pasco Basin. He indicated that the USGS considers that water discharges to the Columbia River. RHO agreed with his position, noting that there was no longer any difference between RHO and the USGS on this item.

e. Hovis stated that the Yakimas were still concerned about getting data promptly and indicated that they may want to observe testing and data collection in the future.

f. Meyer noted that there was a difference in the interpretation of geochemistry data from the various strata in the Cold Creek syncline. RHO stated that they no longer disagreed with the USGS on this issue. i.e. they agreed the data indicates mixing in this area between strata. (The staff should get a clear understanding of exactly what is now agreed upon concerning mixing.)

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9. The State of Washington (Stephens) asked the group what percentage of the data which needed to be collected to allow them to produce an acceptable model had already been obtained. None of the members could answer, nor would they estimate an answer.

h. RHO (Baker) discussed recent findings from the hydrology testing. He noted that gas was seen via video to be emerging from the WanaPum flowtop in DC-19. He indicated RHO was not sure whether the gas is methane or air being released from the zone after being introduced by the air-mist drilling technique used on this well.

i. Hovis requested that DOE provide all the information they have on the presence of gas in the area.

j. The representative of the Umatillas (Michael Farrel SP?) noted the concerns which they have with the potential BWIP repository. These concerns included future contamination of their ground water supply and contamination of their surface waters by transportation accidents on Interstate 84 which passes through their reservation.

3. DOE indicated that their schedule for issuing the BWIP SCP is January 1985. RHO (Ash) has indicated interest in discussing with me what NRC considers should be in this document. I noted that the staff is currently preparing a document which addresses this question. I consider a workshop concerning the content of the SCP is indicated.

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F. Robert Cook
Senior On-site Licensing Rep., BWIP

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