



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

SEP 29 1983

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 WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 18, 1983

1. RHO and DOE discussed RHO's proposal for selecting the repository horizon. The proposal is for the Cohasset flow. A statistical method of combining various measured parameters in each candidate flow (Umtanum, McCoy Canyon, Cohasset, and Rocky Coulee) with weighing factors was used to assess the desirability of each flow for a future repository. Approximate weighing factors were 85% for parameters affecting construction; 13% for performance and 2% for costs. A copy of this RHO evaluation was forwarded separately. On Thursday, DOE (Squires) stated that DOE (RO) had concluded the weighing factors are inappropriate and that at least 50% should be assigned to performance parameters in lieu of 13%.

In contract with original plans, Gemeia (RHO) did not attend the briefing of DOE Headquarters on the RHO proposal on September 23, 1983. Fitch (RHO) made the presentation instead.

It appears RHO is in the process of revising their analysis per DOE (RO) comments.

NOTE: If we have any issues we would want RHO to address, now is the time to tell DOE. I would think that RHO should include evaluation of parameters which affect waste package performance, e.g., temperature, tectonic loads, and ground water chemistry, including dissolved gases.

2. RHO (Gemeia) would like to move the large drill rig from the RRL to a location out of the central zone and test the rig in basalts with significant water content. For example, they would like to move the rig to the northeast corner of the Hanford site (greater than 10 miles from the RRL) and drill a large hole (approximately 18-20 feet diameter) through the Priest Rapids Member. They consider the information gained on casing techniques and shaft sealing would be valuable information for

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the SCP. RHO (Gemeia) does not believe such drilling is prohibited by NWPA.

Waste Management should decide whether or not such drilling would be permitted. If it is acceptable, I consider WM should encourage DOE to proceed with the testing off-site. It will help resolve issues we have identified to the ACRS and in the SCA concerning shaft sealing techniques.

3. DOE has invited me to attend, as an observer, the hydrology workshops with PNL, USGS, and RHO. The next one is on October 3, 1983 at Richland. WM should decide whether attendance is appropriate. R. Wright has indicated he does not consider that I should attend. I consider the understanding of the group member interactions, as well as the technical progress, will be helpful in planning WM actions. Attendance is consistent with the spirit of the NRC/DOE MOU to stay abreast of technical happenings. If we decline the opportunity to stay informed in this key area, it would appear we would be contradicting all our other comments and requests to DOE to keep us informed.

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