

APR 29 1992

Mr. John P. Roberts, Acting Associate Director
for Systems and Compliance
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Mr. Roberts:

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF "REPORT OF EARLY SITE SUITABILITY EVALUATION OF THE
POTENTIAL REPOSITORY SITE AT YUCCA MOUNTAIN, NEVADA" (SAIC-91/8000)

On March 3, 1992, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) transmitted the contractor baseline site evaluation, "Report of Early Site Suitability Evaluation of the Potential Repository Site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada" (ESSE) to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and other interested parties for a 90-day public comment period. At an earlier date (DOE/NRC management meeting on pre-licensing consultation, February 6, 1992) NRC staff agreed to provide DOE, the State of Nevada, and units of affected local governments with NRC's review plan for the subject report. This letter transmits the NRC staff's review plan for the ESSE.

The purpose of the NRC review is to determine if: 1) there are major concerns related to technical evaluations; 2) there is consistency in the use of data; 3) all available data have been considered; and 4) the application and interpretations of the siting guidelines are consistent with those concurred upon by the Commission. The review is not being conducted to determine the adequacy of the site with respect to DOE's siting guidelines; however, if we, at any time, identify that the site does not appear to be appropriate for further characterization, that issue will be raised.

In your letter to me dated March 3, 1992, DOE requested comments by June 15, 1992. The staff is unable to meet this request, but can provide comments by July 15, 1992. However, as part of its comment preparations, the NRC staff will meet and discuss its comments with the NRC's Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste on June 17, 1992. Because the meeting is open to the public, DOE and other interested parties will be able to gain insight into the staff's draft comments prior to July 15, 1992.

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Mr. John P. Roberts

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If you have any comments or questions on the enclosed review plan for the ESSE, please contact Charlotte Abrams, of my staff, at (301) 504-3403/FTS 964-3403.

Sincerely,

JSJ

Joseph J. Holonich, Director
Repository Licensing and Quality
Assurance Project Directorate
Division of High-Level Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Enclosure: As stated *See on shelf*

- cc: R. Loux, State of Nevada
- 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
- C. Thistlethwaite, Inyo County, CA
- V. Poe, Mineral County, NV
- F. Sperry, White Pine County, NV
- R. Williams, Lander County, NV
- P. Goicoechea, Eureka County, NV
- L. Vaughan II, Esmeralda County, NV
- C. Shank, Churchill County, NV
- T. J. Hickey, Nevada Legislative Committee

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