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January 28, 1985

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

FROM: Paul T. Prestholt, Sr. OR-NNWSI PTP

Subject: NNWSI Site Report for Weeks of January 14, and ²¹12, 1985

I. Bill Bland, QA contractor to the PC Branch, was in Las Vegas on the 22nd and 23rd. Mr. Bland was to visit the EPA offices on the 22nd, tour the NTS on the 23, and informally visit with Jim Blalock, DOE-WMPO QA Supervisor on the 24th. Mr. Bland met with the EPA on the 22nd, however, procedural objections to Bland's meeting with Blalock were raised by the RP Branch, causing the meeting to be cancelled. Mr. Bland decided to leave Las Vegas early on the 23rd, thereby cancelling the NTS tour.

On the morning of the 22nd, Mr. Bland met with Art Jarvis and with Gene Easterly, head of the EPA QA laboratory in Las Vegas. Bland was given a number of EPA QA documents that may be useful to the Division QA effort. In the afternoon he met with Dr. Stuart C. Black concerning the need to verify data, particularly old data without obvious pedigree. Dr. Black gave Bland a document describing the work of a "super peer group" that worked with old data related to "Love Canal".

Mr. Bland will be submitting a report to Mark Delligatti detailing his activities in Las Vegas.

II. Three EA briefings were held the week of the 21st; Las Vegas on the 22nd, Beatty, on the 23rd, and Reno on the 24th. The briefings were held between 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. I attended the Las Vegas and Beatty briefings.

The Content of the Las Vegas briefing was similar to the January 8th briefing in Carson City. The major difference was that William Purcell presented the overview discussion instead of J.J. Fiori. There was a large audience and a full 2+ hours of questions. The audience refused a 15 minute coffee break to avoid

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wasting time. The tone and content of the questions showed thought and a surprising lack of prejudice. The following are some of the questions asked:

- Is the repository going to house foreign waste?
- What would be the radionuclide release should there be a direct hit by a nuclear warhead?
- Would or could the NRC license Yucca Mountain as a nuclear power plant site?
- Will high frequency seismic energy resulting from the detonation of a nuclear device in Yucca Flat affect the Yucca Mountain site?
- How durable are emplacement casks?
- A number of transportation questions.
- One gentleman wanted all trucks and shipping canisters painted violent colors so that the nature of the shipment would be obvious to everyone.
- Would there be assistance to local police and fire departments should there be an accident?
- A number of comments (negative) concerning the affect on tourism.
- Would spent fuel be recovered for reprocessing after emplacement?

The Beatty briefing on the 23rd was significantly different in the makeup of the audience. Only local people attended and the focus of comment was on jobs and the impact of the workforce influx on the local services. The Chairman of the Western Shoshone Tribe made a statement in which he claimed ownership of Yucca Mountain for the Western Shoshone Tribe. He complained that the land has never been purchased from the tribe and that he wants a responsible high level government official to negotiate with the tribe. Some other questions were:

- How far west will the NTS boundary move?
- Several questions concerning aquifer depletion.
- Will hiring (for labor & construction jobs) be done in Nye County?

- How will the Timber Mountain Caldera affect the site?
- Have increased electrical power requirements been considered?
- Will living patterns change given an additional 1.5 to 2 hours per day on a bus? This question pertains to the 1+ hour bus ride to Mercury from Las Vegas. Yucca Mountain is another 1/2+ hour from Las Vegas by bus. Therefore, would more of the labor force prefer to live in Amargosa Valley and Beatty?
- It was suggested that the railroad spur from Las Vegas to Yucca Mountain be constructed off the bombing range and test site (run on the east side of the road) so that it could benefit Nye County residents.

I did not attend the Reno briefing. However, I understand that the audience was much less friendly with antagonistic comments from the Western Shoshone Indians, the Citizens Alert Group, and Concerned Physicians.

III. The continued controversy over the Olmstead/Altman presentation to the NNWSI participants is causing some problems. Most personnel assigned to NNWSI projects at the USGS, Sandia, Los Alamos, and Livermore are holding the proposed dates open for the presentation at their respective locations. It is highly desired by the NNWSI management (Dr. Vieth and the TPO's) that the presentations take place. The fact that Dr. Vieth and the DOE are willing to pay all transportation and livings costs incurred during the time of the presentations attests to this. It is important that the NRC resolve, as soon as possible, the internal problems concerning these presentations so that the NNWSI can be informed as to what the NRC is willing to do.

IV. The NNWSI licensing group has asked for an official position on issue resolution between staffs, through rulemaking and the hearing process. I was able to give Jerry Szymanski, DOE-WMPO, a copy of the transcript of a meeting held December 17, 1984, concerning the DOE Mission Plan, in which Hub Miller addressed this topic in some detail. Miller's statements answered Szymanski's questions. However, Szymanski did request the NRC consider publishing the essence of Miller's remarks as a formal NRC position.