

MAR 11 1982

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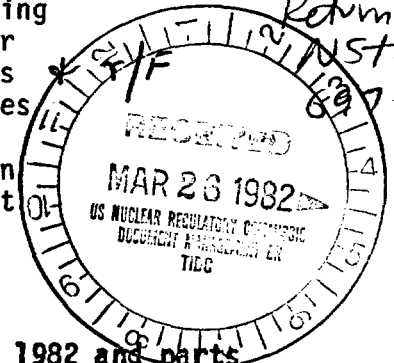
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Mr. W. Wade Ballard, Director
Office of Waste Isolation
Nuclear Waste Management and
Fuel Cycle Programs
Office of Nuclear Energy
Washington, DC 20545

Dear Mr. Ballard:

This is in response to DOE letters dated February 3 and 9, 1982 and parts of the DOE February 24, 1982 letter from your office on the development of national standards for geotechnical procedures used in characterizing potential high-level waste repository sites. Specifically, in response to previous letters from NRC, these letters state it is DOE's intention to initiate development of draft standard testing procedures in the broad areas of rock mechanics, geochemistry, hydrology, and others similar to NRC-sponsored ASTM work on in situ tests. The February 9th letter requests that DOE be apprised of additional work under NRC purview of a standards-setting nature and of our work in rock mechanics. We are pleased to hear of your plans to initiate activities to develop draft standard testing procedures in geotechnical areas such as rock mechanics, hydrology, and geochemistry.

As noted in enclosures to a letter to R. Stein on December 17, 1981, we have a number of research and technical assistance contracts underway other than in the field of in situ testing and rock mechanics that are aimed at assisting the development of specific regulatory guidance. These efforts will be yielding results which we expect to issue in the form of draft regulatory guides or technical positions within the next year or so. These efforts are aimed at documenting agreement on required licensing information needs in the principal technical areas of high-level waste management as discussed in my December 16, 1981 memo to Carl Cooley on this subject.

We consider that the most effective way to respond to your requests would be to brief you on these research and technical assistance programs. In addition to the benefit of assuring the avoidance of duplication of effort (as noted in the February 9th letter), our briefing should provide an opportunity to discuss the scope and schedules of these technical positions in order to assure they will meet the DOE schedule needs as it establishes its programs of site characterization technical development. We are not planning to issue guidance or position documents without the extensive involvement of the DOE. In this meeting, we can also discuss more specifically the scope and timing of standards efforts that you are planning because your letters are indefinite on these matters.

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Please call me at 427-4177 to discuss setting up a briefing on our licensing guidance plans in high-level waste management either in Washington, DC or in Columbus, OH (as has been suggested by T. Longo).

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Hubert J. Miller, Chief
High-Level Waste Technical
Development Branch
Division of Waste Management

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