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April 7, 1987

Robert E. Browning, Director
Division of Waste Management, MMS
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Browning:

We have reviewed your letter requesting the Bureau of Mines to provide an opinion on the feasibility of drilling shafts and constructing a repository in the Cohasset flow at the Hanford site. The Bureau is willing to render an opinion on this question. I have assigned the Spokane and Denver Research Centers the primary responsibility for carrying out this task; they have begun this review.

In developing our response we feel that significant time will be needed to review pertinent background information and better clarify some geologic points. We believe this task can be done within a 3-month time period, and are developing a schedule and a set of questions relating to the scope and purpose of this study. This information will be discussed with NRC personnel at the upcoming review meeting for our task work covering "Rock Support in Underground Geologic Repositories", tentatively planned for late April.

Sincerely,

DAVID R. FORSHEY
Assistant Director--Mining Research

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