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NUCLEAR SYSTEMS SAFETY PROGRAM

'84 JAN 30 P4:12

January 13, 1984  
EG-84-004/0992u

WM Record File  
A-0294

WM Project 10, 11, 16  
Docket No. \_\_\_\_\_  
PDR  
LPDR B, N, S

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SUBJECT: MONTHLY MANAGEMENT LETTER REPORT NO. 9  
Progress for the Month of December 1983  
NRC FIN A0294  
Technical Assistance in Seismo-Tectonic Impacts in Repositories

## 1. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION

The objective of this program is to provide technical assistance to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on waste repositories in the following areas:

- a. Reviewing the uncertainties and limitations of the data and methods used in seismo-tectonic investigations completed by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).
- b. Identifying and evaluating issues<sup>(1)</sup> in seismo-tectonics related to design and construction, long-term repository performance and ground-water flow.
- c. Providing input to the technical basis for NRC technical positions in the area of seismo-tectonics.

Our approach to achieve this objective is to evaluate DOE's seismo-tectonic assessments through review of related DOE reports, including Site Characterization Plans (SCP); participation in workshops and site visits; and identification and evaluation of issues in seismo-tectonics related to

<sup>1</sup> An issue is a question about a site that is critical to determination of site suitability at the construction authorization stage in terms of the performance objectives and requirements of 10 CFR 60, Subpart E.

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design and construction, long term repository performance and groundwater flow. We will provide input to the technical basis for NRC technical positions in the area of seismo-tectonics.

Site characterization review plans for FY 83 and FY 84 include Hanford-BWIP site, NNWSI, and a salt site. In preparing our reviews, we will consider the guidelines found in Regulatory Guide 4.17, "Standard Format and Content of Site Characterization Reports for High-Level Waste Geologic Repositories," "Review Plan for Site Characterization," and 10 CFR 60 (draft), "Disposal of High-Level radioactive Wastes in Geologic Repositories: Technical Criteria."

Specifically, the NRC has requested LLNL to assist the NRC in meeting the needs described above by performing independent review and associated studies based upon LLNL's experience and expert knowledge.

#### Specific Work Requirements

There are two (2) tasks as follows:

#### Task 1: Review of the DOE Site Characterization Program in Seismo-Tectonics

- 1.1 Preparatory Site Characterization Program Review
- 1.2 Preparatory Site Characterization Analysis
- 1.3 Review of SCP and SCP Biannual Updates
- 1.4 Review of Public Comments

#### Task 2: General Technical Assistance to NRC

With these tasks and subtasks above, four sets of NRC needs are recognized.

First, there is the need to assemble existing data base and adequacy of methods used to collect and interpret the data. Second, there is the need to perform site-specific seismo-tectonic issues (in basalts at Hanford, tuff at the Nevada Test Site (NNWSI) and a salt site, yet to be determined). Third, there is the need to identify other additional information needed to perform quantitative assessments to determine if there is reasonable assurance that the site will meet the performance objectives of 10 CFR Part 60. The fourth need is to contribute to the technical basis for NRC technical positions or appendices to the Site Characterization Analysis (SCA) in the area of seismo-tectonics.

## 2. PROGRESS - DECEMBER 1983

Our major effort for the reporting period was placed upon Task 1.

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In November 1983, we initiated our preparation of a draft Site Technical Position (STP) paper for the BWIP site. To properly assess the Technical Criteria of 10 CFR Part 60 (based on the current information available for the BWIP site), the following specific issues concerning the geologic stability of the site need to be addressed.

1. What is the conceptual tectonic model(s) of the Cold Creek syncline and surrounding area?
2. Is rupture due to faulting possible on or below the surface at the RRL?
3. What is the impact of the Rattlesnake-Wallula Alignment (RWA) on the RRL site?
4. What is the earthquake hazard at the RRL site?

We are currently developing our STP issues (with discussion) along this line.

During this reporting period, we have initiated our technical contact with the Los Alamos Group (working on aspects of volcanic hazard studies for the NNWSI site). We have received the following reports for our evaluation: (1) "Status of volcanic hazard studies for the Nevada Nuclear Waste Storage Investigations," LA-9325-MS (dated March 1983); (2) "Volcanic-tectonic history of Crater Flat, Southwestern Nevada, as suggested by new evidence from drill hole USW-VH-1 and vicinity," USGS Open-File Report 82-457 (dated 1982); (3) "Preliminary assessment of the risk of volcanism at a proposed nuclear waste repository in the Southern Great Basin," USGS Open-File Report 80-357 (dated 1980); and (4) "Major-element geochemistry of the Silent Canyon-Black Mountain peralkaline volcanic center: Applications to an assessment of renewed volcanism," USGS Open-File Report 79-926 (dated 1979).

Effective December 1st, Ms. Kristin Westbrook, Geologist with Geotechnical Branch, DWM, was named the NRC Project Manager (PM) for this project, replacing Ms. Martha W. Pendelton. On December 5th, Dr. Philip S. Justus (Acting Chief, Geotechnical Branch, DWM) and Mr. Ben Rice visited us at LLNL. We reviewed the status of our progress in various topics related to geology, geophysics, geochemistry and geohydrology of both the BWIP and NNWSI sites. NRC needs for technical assistance (from LLNL) related to a review and evaluation of "EA" documents were briefly discussed.

Considerable efforts are being made in our preparation for an LLNL independent evaluation of the BWIP site, the NNWSI site and salt sites.

### 3. PLANS FOR NEXT MONTH

Complete a draft STP paper for the BWIP site. Meet with the NRC/PM and staff for technical coordination.

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4. ESTIMATED PROJECT FINANCIAL STATUS

See Attachment A

5. LIST OF CONSULTANTS/SUBCONTRACTORS

D. Burton Slemmons, Consulting Geologist (Subcontractor).

6. PROJECT CONCERNS

None.



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