

A1165

PDR-1
LPDR-WM-10 (2)
WM-11 (2)
WM-16 (2)

DGAL 8/11 M2 STEIN

- 1 -

AUG 14 1987

Ralph Stein
Director of Engineering and Geotechnology
Office of Geologic Repositories
U.S. Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

SUBJECT: TRANSITION OF SANDIA/NRC HLW PROGRAM

Dear Mr. Stein:

Further to the recent NRC/DOE telephone conversations concerning the transition of contractual support for Division 6416 of Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) from NRC funds to DOE funds, please find enclosed a copy of a letter dated August 6, 1987 from myself to Nestor Ortiz of SNL concerning this subject. SNL has been providing outstanding technical support for a number of years to the NRC's high-level waste (HLW) program in the area of performance assessment in particular.

I should like to ask for your assistance in ensuring that this transition occurs smoothly and efficiently so as to make continuing maximum use of the valuable staff expertise and resources within this Division. I look forward to working with you and your performance assessment staff on coordination of this transition.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by
MICHAEL J. BELL

[Signature]
Robert E. Browning, Director
Division of High-Level Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Enclosure:
As stated

cc w/o encl.: Nestor Ortiz

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WM Record File
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WM Project 10, 11, 16
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Distribution: _____

(Return to WM, 623-SS)

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AUG 6 1987

DGAL 7/29 M2 ORTIZ

- 1 -

Mr. Nestor R. Ortiz, Manager
Division of Reactor Systems Safety
Department 6410
Sandia National Laboratories
Albuquerque, NM 87185

Dear Mr. Ortiz:

SUBJECT: TRANSITION OF SANDIA/NRC HLW PROGRAM

I should like to respond to your letter of February 16, 1987, in which you proposed a phased approach for the transition of high-level waste (HLW) staff resources and expertise within SNL's Division of Reactor Systems Safety (Department 6416) from NRC contract work only in FY87 to DOE contract work only in FY92. In your letter you also referred to the gradual transfer of technology from SNL to the Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC), which the NRC will be funding by FY88.

In view of SNL's special expertise in the HLW performance assessment area, and the valuable contribution SNL has made to NRC programs in this area over the past several years, I would like to be able to continue to draw on this expertise through FY87 and into FY88, and possibly longer, depending on developments within the HLW program and availability of funding. I strongly support the timely transfer of technology from SNL to NRC staff and, as soon as practicable, to the FFRDC. I also strongly support your desire to ensure that this SNL expertise is made available to the DOE's High-Level Waste Management Program in a manner that minimizes your problems in retaining experienced staff.

I would like to suggest that, insofar as possible, only when the NRC is no longer able to provide full support of SNL's HLW performance assessment group, should this group be supported by the DOE. I recognize, however, that at some point in the transition (perhaps in FY89), this group will also need to be partially supported by the DOE in order to make maximum use of SNL's staff expertise. We will work closely with you and appropriate DOE management to ensure that there will be sufficient advance notice of when NRC support will end to effect a smooth transition from NRC to DOE support. In addition, the NRC will carefully coordinate this transition with the DOE so as to ensure that current staff expertise at SNL is always used to the maximum extent possible. This approach differs from your suggestion of a more gradual phased approach because (1) I wish to avoid even the appearance of any conflict of interest, and (2) I consider that with appropriate channeling of SNL resources by the NRC's Project Manager, technology transfer to NRC and FFRDC staff should be substantially completed within the lifetime of NRC contractual support.

I am sorry not to have replied to your letter sooner. Recent developments within the HLW program have, however, lead several times over the past months to a rethinking of the Division of High-Level Waste Management's position on

support by our technical assistance contractors. I look forward to working with you and appropriate DOE management to ensure the smooth transition of SNL staff resources and expertise from NRC contract work to DOE contract work.

Sincerely,

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Robert E. Browning, Director
Division of High-Level Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

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OFFICIAL CONCURRENCE AND DISTRIBUTION RECORD

LETTER TO: Stein, DOE, DC
 FROM: Browning
 SUBJECT: TRANSITION OF SANDIA/NRC HLW PROGRAM
 DATE: AUG 14 1987

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CONCURRENCES

ORGANIZATION/CONCUREE	INITIALS	DATE CONCURRED
HLOB/DGalson	<u>DAG</u>	8/12/87
HLOB/SCoplan	<u>SC</u>	8/13/87
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HWLM/RBrowning:km	<u>Om/B.f</u>	8/14/87

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