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August 3, 1987

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RS-NMS-85-009
Communication No. 187

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Division of High-Level Waste Management
Technical Review Branch
MS 623-SS
Washington, DC 20555

Attention: Mr. Jeff Pohle, Project Officer
Technical Assistance in Hydrogeology - Project B (RS-NMS-85-009)

Re: Trip Report - GWTT Position, Silver Spring, July 13-17, 1987

Dear Mr. Pohle:

This letter comprises Nuclear Waste Consultants' (NWC) trip report for the NRC's meeting with hydrogeology contractors for the purpose of beginning development of a Regulatory Guide on implementation of the NRC's Pre-placement Groundwater Travel Time (GWTT) performance objective. The NWC team was represented by Mr. Adrian Brown (Project Technical Director), Mark Logsdon (Project Manager/Senior Geologist), and Dr. Daniel B. Stephens (Salt Technical Director). Williams and Associates was represented by Dr. Roy Williams, and Sandia National Laboratories was represented by Mr. Paul Davis. The principal NRC Staff involved included Mr. R. Ballard, Mr. D. Chery, Mr. J. Pohle, Dr. R. Codell, and Mr. F. Ross. Additionally, Dr. Tilak Verma, Mssrs. N. Coleman and W. Ford, and several representatives from the Office of Research participated in various portions of the sessions.

The following notes summarize NWC's view of the meeting:

- o During the three days of the principal part of the technical sessions, all members of the Staff/Contractor team worked extremely hard to produce a working draft of a technical position on definitions and implementation guidance that could be edited and forwarded to NRC management for internal review. The cooperation between the members of the working group was better, in the opinion of NWC management, than has been the case on some other occasions, despite a wide range of differences in views on the technical concerns.

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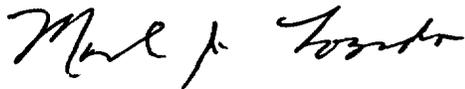
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- o The Staff's preparation for the meeting was excellent. In particular, the preparation of a Staff "Strawman" and a set of background regulatory positions and documents, which were available to the whole team prior to the meeting for review and comment, enabled the sessions to move rapidly into detailed discussions and development of substitute text.
- o The presence of significant Branch and even Division Management involvement throughout the process signaled a degree of control and appropriate concern that helped the team to focus its attention and energies on the critical technical matters to which the participants are best suited by training and experience. Similarly, the related commitment of Dr. Codell and Mssrs. Pohle and Ross to the entire process - free from the myriad of interruptions that can sometimes plague meetings at the Willste Building - provided a needed continuity of effort and Staff direction that kept the process on track and on schedule.
- o The entire working team, NWC considers, developed new insights into the meaning and potential usefulness of the GWT performance objective through the process of dealing with the details. In particular, NWC considers that the development of a team position on the need to identify pathways first and then to consider travel times along the pathways provides an approach that has practical importance to DOE and its site teams, as well as providing needed clarity to the NRC team's internal position on how the matter could be implemented.
- o As had been predicted by Mssrs. Pohle and Ross, the final product of the meeting did not include all the features or details that any one of the team members came into the meeting supporting. However, NWC considers that the product is a technically sound initial position, and that the process of achieving consensus on this longstanding and sometimes divisive matter indicates the fundamental ability of the Staff - contractor team to produce useful and timely regulatory products.

August 3, 1987

NWC looks forward to receiving the draft version of the Staff's position paper for review and comment in the near future. As I discussed with Mssrs. Pohle and Ross on July 17, NWC considers that it would also be helpful to have a copy of the text that actually came out of the meeting (i.e., prior to additional Staff revisions) as well. If you have any questions about this trip report, please contact me immediately.

Respectfully submitted,
NUCLEAR WASTE CONSULTANTS, INC.



Mark J. Logsdon, Project Manager

cc: US NRC - Director, NMSS (ATTN PSB)
HLWM (ATTN Division Director)
Mary Little, Contract Administrator
HLTR (ATTN Branch Chief)
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