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NOTE TO: R. Ballard, Chief
Technical Review Branch, HLWM

THRU: M. Nataraja, Section Leader
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FROM: D. Tiktinsky, Project Manager
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SUBJECT: THE STATUS OF THE NRC/BOM INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT

Distribution:

(Return to WM, 623-SS)

On August 18, 1987 the NRC and the BOM met at BOM headquarters in Washington, D.C. to discuss work under the Interagency Agreement between the NRC and the BOM (FIN B6934). The NRC representatives at this meeting were myself, M. Nataraja and yourself. The BOM was represented by Earl Amey (BOM Project Manager) and Alex Bacho (Division Chief).

The major topics discussed in the meeting were 1) review of a BOM Interagency Agreement (IA) with the Bureau of Reclamation on dry coring of rock related to the Yucca Mountain site; 2) The BOM letter report on the constructibility question for BWIP; 3) the status of work in progress under this IA and 4) The budget for the Interagency Agreement for FY87 and FY88.

1) BOM / Bureau of Reclamation IA

The BOM presented the NRC participants with a proposal, for NRC review, for an IA between the BOM and the Bureau of Reclamation. The activities as contained in this proposal call for the Denver Research Center of the BOM to establish a dry drilling technique for obtaining drill core from welded and non-welded tuff. The Bureau of Reclamation is under contract to the USGS, which is one of DOE's prime contractors for the Yucca Mountain site. The scope of this IA appear to be limited to drilling cores from rock in a laboratory and appears to be in compliance with the NRC/BOM/DOE Protocol Agreement (attached).

2) BOM Letter Report on Constructibility at BWIP.

The NRC presented comments to the BOM on a draft of the letter report on the constructibility question at BWIP. The NRC's comments were minor in nature and consisted of focusing the BOM away from economic concerns which are not within the NRC's charter to regulatory concerns as found in 10 CFR 60. The BOM stated that a final letter report would be submitted within a few days subsequent to the meeting.

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3) Status of Ongoing work under BOM/NRC IA

The BOM is preparing a document describing the state of the art of rock support systems as they apply to high level nuclear waste repositories. This project entails preparing a report for the three media under consideration.

The BOM has submitted a draft version of the report for NNWSI which is presently under review by the NRC. The BWIP sections which have been prepared by the Spokane office of the BOM have also been presented to the NRC in draft form. The salt report is near completion according to information obtained from the BOM, but the NRC has not yet received a draft of this report. Presently all ongoing work is on hold because of the lack of available funding.

4) FY87 and FY88 Budget for NRC/BOM IA

The BOM stated in the meeting that all available funds for the IA had been expended and that all work has been stopped. The BOM also expressed the concern that under the NRC/BOM/DOE Protocol the NRC retained the Denver and Spokane research centers which does not allow these two centers to pursue site specific work with DOE. They also stated that work such as outlined above in item 1 could lead to larger tasks in the future. In addition, the BOM was concerned that the funding level that has been budgeted by the NRC for the IA is insufficient for the BOM to be able to afford to exclude the Denver and Spokane Research center from entering into work agreements with the DOE.

Based on the outcome of the meeting, it appears to me that we have the following options:

- a) Provide the BOM larger funding for FY88 and beyond and increase the level of participation by the BOM.
- b) Allow the current IA to expire at the end of FY87, or
- c) Provide funding which is sufficient to complete all ongoing work, and then close out the IA during FY88.

I recommend that option c be followed. This option would allow the BOM to work for the DOE in any capacity they see fit and would allow BOM expertise to be utilized by the DOE. This should lead to higher quality DOE products as the BOM's positions will be integrated into DOE products before the NRC officially reviews them. In addition, completing the ongoing work will allow a smooth closeout of this IA.

On August 19, 1987 a meeting was held among myself, M. Nataraja and R. Browning, and yourself to discuss these options. In this meeting, Mr. Browning concurred that the IA could be closed out without substantial detrimental effects to the program.

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David Tiktinsky