

LETTER 87/09/10 DT

- 1 -

OCT 30 1987

D. Forshey, Assistant Director
Mining Research
U.S. Bureau of Mines
2401 E. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20241

Dear Mr. Forshey:

SUBJECT: THE INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
AND THE BUREAU OF MINES

On August 18, 1987 a meeting was held at the Bureau of Mines (BOM) headquarters in Washington, DC to discuss work under the Interagency Agreement (IA) between the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the BOM (FIN B6934). The NRC representatives at this meeting were Ronald L. Ballard, Chief, Technical Review Branch (HLTR), Mysore S. Nataraja, Section Leader, HLTR and David Tiktinsky, Project Manager, HLTR. The BOM was represented by Earl Amey, BOM Project Manager and Alex Bacho, Division Chief.

During this meeting the following were discussed: (a) the status of work in progress, (b) a proposal for an Interagency Agreement between the BOM and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) on dry coring of tuff, and (c) FY87 and FY88 budget for the NRC/BOM Interagency Agreement.

- (a) The BOM summarized the status of the ongoing work for the NRC. The work underway is a study on rock support systems for repositories in tuff, salt, and basalt media. The BOM has submitted draft reports for tuff and basalt media for NRC review and has nearly completed the draft for salt medium but has not yet submitted a draft report. The BOM stated in the meeting that all available funds for the IA had been expended and therefore, all work had been temporarily halted.
- (b) The BOM presented for NRC review a proposal for an IA between the BOM (Denver office) and the Bureau of Reclamation (under a subcontract to the United States Geological Survey (USGS) which is a prime contractor to the Department of Energy's (DOE's) Nevada office)) on dry coring of tuff. They also stated that work such as that contained in the proposed IA with the BOR (for DOE) could eventually lead to larger tasks in support of the DOE program in the future. A quick NRC review of the BOR proposal to BOM indicated that the proposed work was generic in nature, and would not pose a conflict of interest under the protocol agreement. However, NRC noted that if the current work leads to site-specific work at a future date, a conflict of interest may very well develop.

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PDR WMRES EUSDOIMI
B-6934 PDR

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WM Project: WM-10, 11, 16
PDR yes
(Return to WM, 623-55)

WM Record File: B-6934
LPDR yes

- (c) The BOM expressed concern that the funding level that has been considered by the NRC for the IA in FY88 (\$150K) is not sufficient for the BOM to continue the level of effort requested by NRC in FY87. They also noted that the previously committed key staff at the Denver and Spokane research centers could not be maintained at the \$150K funding level.

As you may be aware, the NRC has, for the past year, been working towards establishing a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) to support all research and Technical Assistance (TA) needs in the area of High-Level Waste Management. The principal reason for this effort is to create a center of excellence free from any perceived or potential conflict of interest. This effort has necessitated reevaluating all our existing TA needs. As a result of our reevaluation, we have decided to bring existing TA contracts including the BOM agreement to a smooth closure and commit future funding primarily to support the Center.

In order to smoothly close out this IA and complete the outstanding tasks (primarily the task on rock support systems for salt, tuff, and basalt), we will contact your staff shortly regarding an appropriate work statement. Based on our review and discussion to date, most of the work under this task has been completed to our satisfaction and no extensive rewrites of the draft reports are expected. BOM may wish to subject the draft reports to internal peer review to make sure that the work done by Denver and Spokane centers is internally consistent in format, style, and content. While a single final report would be preferred, submittal of the three independent reports would be an acceptable alternative if substantial effort would be required to combine them.

We appreciate the cooperation and expertise that the BOM has provided throughout the life of this IA and we look forward to maintaining close communication as the high-level waste repository work continues.

Sincerely,

**Original Signed by
Robert E. Browning**

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

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- 3 -

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OFFICIAL CONCURRENCE AND DISTRIBUTION RECORD

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RBallard, HLTR	DTiktinsky, HLTR	MNataraja, HLTR	HLTR/RF

CONCURRENCES

ORGANIZATION/CONCUREE	INITIALS	DATE CONCURRED
HLTR/DTiktinsky	*	87/10/
HLTR/MNataraja	*	87/10/
HLTR/RBallard	*	87/10/
ARM/CAB/MLittle	<i>ML</i>	87/10/27
HLWM/REBrowning	<i>REB</i>	87/10/30

* PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS CONCURRENCES

NOTE: ORIGINAL DELIVERED 11/3/87.

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