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14 January 1986

David Tiktinsky - SS623
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Division of Waste Management
Washington, D.C. 20555

"NRC Technical Assistance
for Design Reviews"
Contract No. NRC-02-85-002
FIN D1016

Dear David:

In the proposal we submitted for our current NRC contract, we identified several potential problems that might be expected to occur in the performance of the project. Among these potential problems was the lack of continuity in task-order contracts which are dependent on third-party scheduling.

As a means of overcoming this problem, we recommended that every attempt be made to smooth the work load which is anticipated for the contract. Specifically, we suggested that reviews of key supporting documents be completed as soon as they are identified in order to help alleviate the intensive effort required to complete a major document review such as the Environmental Assessments (EAs) and to maintain the technical team's familiarity with the material.

Although our contract has been active for less than five (5) months, we are concerned about this very problem. The project has been inactive since the beginning of December and, with the exception of a three-day seminar in late January, there are no activities planned. This, in itself, would not be cause for alarm, but a major review of the site EAs is imminent, and we feel that there is much to be done in preparation for this review. In our progress reports, we have identified several documents which we feel should be reviewed and have suggested that we initiate work on a site technical position (STP) paper regarding in-situ geomechanical testing at all the sites.

We would like to make it clear that we are not seeking to create "make-work" projects for us or our consultants. Rather, we are concerned that all parties be well prepared to complete sound technical reviews within the time constraints imposed by the DOE. It is our opinion that this cannot be accomplished unless the supporting documents have been reviewed in advance of the major

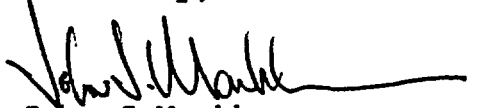
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document reviews. We are insistent on maintaining our capability to represent Itasca and Itasca clients to the very best of our ability.

We are appreciative of the confidence the NRC has shown in Itasca and enjoy working with you on this project. We hope that we are able to work together to achieve both our respective goals.

Sincerely,


John J. Markham
Executive Vice President

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