

Mr. Ralph Stein, Acting Associate Director  
Licensing and Regulatory Division  
Office of Geologic Repositories  
Office of Civilian Radioactive  
Waste Management  
U.S. Department of Energy RW-24  
Washington, DC 20545

MAY 24 1988

Dear Mr. Stein:

This letter transmits, for your information, an observation audit report by Nancy Voltura of my staff for a recently conducted DOE-HQ/DOE-RL audit of Pacific Northwest Laboratory-Material Characterization Center (PNL-MCC) in Richland, Washington. The purpose of the staff's observation audits is to identify concerns with the DOE program before the start of major site characterization work and, as these concerns are resolved, to gain confidence in the adequacy of the DOE program.

As a result of the concerns identified by the DOE audit team, a follow-up audit appears necessary to ensure that PNL implements the required corrective actions. In addition, the following actions would assist the staff in gaining confidence in the DOE quality assurance (QA) program: (a) the DOE-HQ and the PNL QA Plans need to be formally submitted to the staff for review, comment and resolution of comments, and (b) subsequent NRC audits and/or observation audits need to be performed to verify that both the DOE audit team's concerns and the NRC staff recommendations for improvements in the DOE program are properly addressed.

If you have any questions, please contact James Kennedy on FTS 492-3402 or Nancy Voltura on FTS 492-0437.

Sincerely,

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B. J. Youngblood, Chief  
Operations Branch  
Division of High-Level Waste Management  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

Enclosure: As stated

DISTRIBUTION:

cc: Pierre Saget, DOE-RL  
James Blaylock, DOE-NV  
Karl Sommer, DOE-HQ

Central File	J. Bunting	LPDR
B. J. Youngblood	NMSS R/F	PDR
R. E. Browning	HLOB R/F	CNWRA
R. Ballard	P. Prestholt	LSS
N. Voltura	J. Kennedy	

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NAME : NVoltura:vkg:JKennedy	: BJ Youngblood:	:	:	:	:	:
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