

WM900006/SEISMIC TP

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APR 06 1990

Mr. Ralph Stein  
 Associate Director for Systems Integration  
 and Regulations  
 Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management  
 U.S. Department of Energy RW-24  
 Washington, D.C. 20545

Dear Mr. Stein:

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO FEBRUARY 27, 1990, LETTER ON THE SEISMIC HAZARD  
 INVESTIGATIONS TECHNICAL POSITION

In a letter dated February 27, 1990, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) suggested that U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff consider alternatives to the draft Technical Position (TP), "Methods of Evaluating the Seismic Hazard Present at a Geologic Repository," currently under development. In particular, DOE stated that, in its opinion, no additional guidance on seismic hazards investigations was necessary. The staff is aware of and acknowledges DOE's concerns raised in the February 27 letter and as discussed earlier with DOE and the State of Nevada during the December 19-20, 1989, seismic hazards technical exchange.

However, it should be noted that the intent of this TP is to provide DOE with guidance and to document the NRC staff position on acceptable investigations for identifying potential seismic hazards at a geologic repository. This guidance is directly related to the requirements in 10 CFR Part 60. Although the staff has previously issued some guidance in the area of seismic hazard investigations through its review of DOE documents (e.g., NRC comments on the Final Environmental Assessment and in the Site Characterization Analysis), the staff believes that its position on information needs for seismic hazard investigations, as it relates to licensing, needs to be established and documented. Hence, the reason for issuing this TP.

At present, the staff is in the initial stages of developing complementary guidance on performing a Probabilistic Seismic Hazard Analysis (PSHA). This guidance will identify for DOE the attributes of a PSHA approach that are acceptable to the staff. However, the results of the PSHA work are not complete at this time.

Thus, by combining the guidance given in the existing draft TP with the guidance for a PSHA under development, DOE should have a sufficient regulatory basis for describing the seismic hazard at the repository site.

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If you have any questions or desire additional clarification regarding this correspondence, please contact Michael P. Lee of my staff. Mr. Lee can be reached at 301/492-0421 or FTS 492-0421.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

John J. Linehan, Director  
Repository Licensing and Quality  
Assurance Project Directorate  
Division of High-Level Waste Management  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

- cc: R. Loux, State of Nevada
- M. Baughman, Lincoln County, NV
- S. Bradhurst, Nye County, NV
- D. Bechtel, Clark County, NV
- C. Gertz, DOE/Nevada
- D. Weigel, GAO

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