



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

FEB 10 1989

NOTE TO: HLWM Branch Chiefs
FROM: Mark Delligatti, SPAET Program Element Manager
SUBJECT: HIGH-LEVEL WASTE INFORMATION SUMMARY
FOR FEBRUARY 10, 1989

Enclosed is the High-Level Waste Information Summary prepared by the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses (CNWRA). Items in this issue should be of interest to all segments of the Division

Mark Delligatti, SPAET Program Element Manager

Enclosure: As Stated

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CENTER FOR NUCLEAR WASTE REGULATORY ANALYSIS
Washington Office

Pertinent Information Summary

4-89

February 10, 1989

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this summary is to provide timely information that is relevant to the management of High Level Nuclear Waste. Source document information is provided the reader who desires more information. Accuracy of the information is not guaranteed.

REPORT

Subject: DOE Says Additional Spent Fuel Capacity Needed by 2000

Source: The Radioactive Exchange - January 31, 1989

Summary: A January 31, 1989 DOE-OCRWM report entitled, "Implementation Plan for the Deployment of Federal Interim Storage (FIS) for Commercial Spent Fuel" proclaims that utilities will need an additional 3700 MTHM of storage capacity by the year 2000 if there are no significant off-site transshipments. With transshipments, the need drops to 2000 MTHM. DOE further claims that as of the release date of this document no utility had requested the use of the FIS program. On January 1, 1990 DOE's authority to implement this program expires.

Subject: HLW Review Board Appointed

Source: The Radioactive Exchange - January 31, 1989

Summary: As one of his final acts in office, President Reagan appointed eight of the eleven possible members to the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, including the Chairman.

Subject: DOE SCP Report Delays Hold Up NRC Acceptance Review of ESF-DAA

Source: The Radioactive Exchange - January 31, 1989

Summary: The Site Characterization Plan issued by DOE-OCRWM on December 28, 1988 did not contain all the supporting reference documents. Missing from the December 28 report were: the Exploratory Shaft Facility (ESF) design acceptable analysis (DAA); five study plans on ESF and certain SCP references. Submittal of an incomplete Plan has delayed NRC's acceptance review of the ESF-DAA by the end of January. As of January 31, the date of this article in The

	Initials	Date
Cognizant Director Approval	<i>[Signature]</i>	2/13/89
Element/Subelement Approval	<i>[Signature]</i>	2/10/89

Radioactive Exchange, NRC had only received the cited "certain SCP references."

Subject: Utility Executives Vote Not To Sue DOE On HLW Program Delay

Source: The Radioactive Exchange - January 31, 1989

Summary: At the January 12 session of the American Committee on Radioactive Waste Disposal, utility members voted against a motion to initiate litigation against DOE for deciding to delay the projected start-up of the HLW repository from 1998 to 2003.

Subject: Protest Filed by Park Service Opposing DOE's Water Permit

Source: The Radioactive Exchange - January 31, 1989

Summary: The National Park Service Water Resource Division has filed a formal protest opposing the DOE's application to the state of Nevada's water agency for a water permit to support work at the Yucca Mountain project site. Basis for the protest, was that granting the application "...may cause injury to reserved and appropriative water rights of the United States, National Park Service, Death Valley National Monument, including the United States' reserved water rights at Devil's Hole, a detached unit of Death Valley National Monument.

Nevada officials are uncertain as to how the state water agency will respond to the protest, but do believe that final action on DOE's permit will be delayed based on concerns voiced in the past of how further water withdrawal from the area would affect the native pupfish. If the water agency requires an in-depth study be made of this impact prior to issuance of a permit, ESF start-up could be delayed for months even a year unless DOE obtains the needed water supply from other sources.

Subject: Research Panel Report to Examine Uses, Limits of Ground Water Modeling

Source: Nuclear Waste News - February 2, 1989

Summary: The results are due this spring from an 18-month study being conducted by the National Research Council on the regulatory and legal limitations of ground water models. The report, "Ground Water Modeling: Scientific and Regulatory Applications," will recommend that models, recognizing their limitations, can be useful tools in solving problems, studying processes and designing remedial strategies.

Federal and state regulators are relying more on ground water models to support their regulations, including the upcoming high-level and low-level radioactive waste disposal standards. However, the panel is still determining whether ground water models are dependable enough for use in assigning liability for specific ground water incidents or in making regulatory decisions based on long-term predictions.

This study is supported by the Electric Power Research Institute, the NRC, the EPA, U.S. Army, and the National Science Foundation.

Subject: Utilities Suggest On-site Storage of Spent Fuel Rather Than A MRS Facility

Source: Nuclear Waste News - February 2, 1989

Summary: The Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS) along with two other utilities, in testifying at a recent MRS Review Commission hearing, suggested paying for on-site storage for their spent fuel rather than paying to site, construct and operate a separate MRS facility. These utilities expressed continuing frustration with the costly delays in building the high-level radioactive waste repository. Donald W. Mazur, managing director of the WPPSS stated, "In the first place, asking the Department of Energy to take on construction and operation of an MRS will put a substantial additional burden on that agency and divert staff attention from, and likely further delay, the critically important nuclear fuel repository program."

Subject: NRC Gives OK To QA Acceptance Schedule for ESF Work; However Problems Exist

Sources: The Radioactive Exchange - January 31, 1989
The HLW Focus of the Radioactive Exchange - January 31, 1989

Summary: At a January 25 combined NRC-DOE staff meeting, John J. Linehan, Director of Repository Licensing and Quality Assurance, agreed to a Quality Assurance (QA) program audit schedule for new site characterization activities that will provide DOE-OCRWM with NRC's evaluation of an individual contractor's QA program within 37 days following the beginning of a qualification audit.

Originally, NRC proposed a twelve week acceptance schedule for an individual contractor's QA program. However, NRC compromised and proposed a schedule that provides DOE-OCRWM with a qualification letter within 7 days after completion of the DOE-OCRWM qualification audit which would include NRC staff as observers.

According to the schedule, the first of nine qualification audits will start about mid-April, with the audits commencing every two weeks. The sequenced schedule is based on not finding any major "showstoppers" in any of the QA programs. If one "showstopper" is found, DOE is committed to correct the situation prior to proceeding. A problem that could undermine the QA qualification schedule and therefore the ESF startup, is the potential lack of agreement between NRC and DOE on what constitutes a "showstopper." As was explained at the meeting, DOE and NRC staff may not be using the same basis to evaluate the individual QA programs and therefore if NRC determines that a "showstopper" problem exists, DOE, using its own basis for evaluation, may not reach the same conclusion.