

APR 20 1993

Dr. Robert G. Baca, Manager  
 Performance Assessment Program Element  
 Center for Nuclear Waste  
 Regulatory Analyses  
 Southwest Research Institute  
 6220 Culebra Road  
 San Antonio, Texas 78228-0510

Dear Dr. Baca:

SUBJECT: TRIP REPORT: NRC/DOE TECHNICAL EXCHANGE ON PERFORMANCE  
 ASSESSMENT, BETHESDA, MD., DECEMBER 14-15, 1993

This subject trip report has been reviewed by appropriate NRC staff. The submission of this report satisfies the requirements of Intermediate Milestone number 061-220-010 in Subtask 1.3: Assist in DOE/NRC Technical Exchange Meetings Related to PA.

However, although the NRC staff considers the subject trip report to be a contractually acceptable deliverable, it contains several errors and misinterpretations concerning the presentations given by NRC staff during this technical exchange. These are identified in the attached comments.

If you have any questions regarding these concerns, please contact Norman Eisenberg at (301) 504-2324.

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Robert B. Neel, Program Element Manager  
 Performance Assessment Element  
 Hydrology and Systems Performance Branch  
 Division of High-Level Waste Management, NMSS

Enclosure:  
 As stated

cc: Willard Brown

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DETAILED COMMENTS ON CNWRA TRIP REPORT: NRC/DOE TECHNICAL EXCHANGE ON  
PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT, BETHESDA, MD., DECEMBER 14-15, 1993

The following are the NRC staff comments on the subject trip report:

1. On page 2 in the second paragraph, it is stated in the second sentence that N.A. Eisenberg described the various ongoing IPA Phase 2 activities (e.g., NRC's evaluation of DOE site characterization program). On Dr. Eisenberg's presentation slides, these were labeled as objectives of Phase 2, and not specific activities of the effort. This is an important distinction, because the main focus of IPA is to do Performance Assessment; however, the knowledge, experience, and insight gained are excellent to support other activities!
2. On page 3 in the fifth paragraph, it is stated that the main focus of Task 6 involved the use of the SAS statistical package. This is incorrect. The statistical package being used in Task 6 is S-PLUS. In addition, progress in Task 6 was discussed not only by V. Colten-Bradley, but also by R. Byrne.
3. On page 5, a discussion of IPA 2.5 is provided. It is the staff's recollection that this presentation was not given at the technical exchange between the NRC and DOE on December 14-15, but at the accompanying Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste (ACNW) workshop group meeting on performance assessment on December 16, 1992.
4. On page 7, the Center recommends that Technical Exchanges in performance assessment between NRC and DOE should be organized on special topics and held every 9-12 months (i.e., not linked to the completion of an overall system performance assessment). This was deemed to have the dual advantages of allowing the NRC/CNWRA to "(i) have a greater influence on the approach and direction of the SNL/DOE IPA program; and (ii) provide faster access to the data base being assembled by DOE contractors for IPA and subsystem PA studies.

With respect to the first proposed advantage, one should be careful not to give the erroneous impression that the NRC staff has responsibility for directly controlling the DOE program.

With regard to the second advantage, the staff does not consider it a given that more frequent Technical Exchanges will provide faster access to DOE's data base. We have undertaken to establish formal arrangements, agreements, and protocols for obtaining this data.