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Mr. W. J. Purcell
Associate Director
Office of Geologic Repositories
Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management
U. S. Department of Energy
RW-20
Washington, D.C. 20545

Dear Mr. Purcell:

The purpose of the geologic repository prelicensing consultation and guidance program now being conducted by the NRC and DOE staffs is to fully inform the DOE about the type and amount of information that must be provided in a license application to allow a licensing decision to be made by the NRC. As one important mechanism in this process the staff has developed Issue-Oriented Site Technical Positions (ISTPs) which identify issues the NRC staff considers must be addressed at the time of repository licensing. The purpose of this letter is to transmit these ISTPs to DOE and to describe their part in the prelicensing consultation program.

Enclosed are 10 copies each of the ISTPs for the following potential geologic repository sites:

- o Basalt Waste Isolation Project (BWIP)
- o Nevada Nuclear Waste Storage Investigations (NNWSI)
- o Salt Repository Project (SRP)
 - Permian Basin Sites
 - Paradox Basin Sites
 - Gulf Coast Dome Sites

These ISTPs provide guidance on what the NRC staff considers to be issues that need to be addressed in an acceptable license application for a potential high-level waste geologic repository by presenting information needs (issues) and associated rationales. These issues and rationales were developed by a systematic and comprehensive assessment of the overall geologic repository and its components. The NRC has elected to develop guidance of this form and in this early period of the prelicensing process to provide a logical framework for addressing pertinent issues relating to site characterization and design development.

The ISTPs address site issues in the areas of geology/geophysics, waste package, geologic repository operations area design/rock mechanics, hydrology, and geochemistry. The issues in the ISTPs for geology/geophysics and hydrology are the same for all of the sites at a broad level but are different for the most specific level to account for different site characteristics. The ISTPs for the other technical areas are essentially the same for all the sites presently being considered, but contain minor differences reflecting differences in the media for each project.

BWIP
NNWSI-1039
NNWSI-422
Salt-747

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At present, DOE is in the process of preparing the Environmental Assessments (EAs) for site screening required by the NWPA. The staff will be reviewing and commenting on these upon their publication. As noted in the text of the ISTPs, these staff documents address licensing issues which need to be resolved prior to licensing of a site. The ISTPs will therefore not be utilized as a benchmark in the staff's review of the EAs, nor will DOE be expected to address the ISTPs in their resolution of comments.

The staff is transmitting to the Federal Register a Notice of Availability on the ISTPs which provides for a 60-day public comment period. In addition to soliciting public comments, the staff solicits comments from the DOE. The copies which we are transmitting with this letter are for your convenience in developing comments from your staff, the field offices, and your contractors. The Division of Waste Management requests that the Department provide a single set of comments for each of these documents.

If you have any questions about these documents, please contact Hubert Miller, Chief, Repository Projects Branch, Division of Waste Management (FTS-427-4177).

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Hubert J. Miller, Chief
Repository Projects Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Enclosures:
Issue-Oriented Site Technical Positions

- cc: D. Vieth (NNWSI ISTP only)
- O. L. Olson (BWIP ISTP only)
- J. Neff (SRP ISTPs only)
- R. Stein (All ISTPs)
- C. Head (All ISTPs)

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NAME	:MJRhodes	:JEKennedy	:HJM Miller	:	:	:	:
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