

AUG 04 1989

Mr. Ralph Stein, Associate Director  
Office of 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: MINUTES FROM JULY 6, 1989 QUALITY ASSURANCE MEETING, AND JULY 6 AND  
7, 1989 DESIGN CONTROL MEETING

The purpose of this letter is to transmit the minutes from the July 6, 1989 quality assurance (QA) meeting, and the July 6 and 7, 1989 design control meeting. The meetings were attended by staff from the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), representatives from the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE), the State of Nevada, and local units of government. The minutes were prepared by members of the NRC staff and representatives from DOE. They do not include a written statement from the State of Nevada or any local government that attended.

During the July 6, 1989 meeting, the NRC staff's acceptance of the DOE and DOE contractor QA programs was discussed. Overall, it was agreed that the approach presented by the staff represented a refinement in its original approach of reviewing and accepting QA programs. As discussed at the meeting, the specific actions required for DOE and NRC acceptance of a QA program include: (1) having the necessary plans and procedures in place; (2) having staff trained and qualified; and (3) demonstrating the ability to implement the QA program. In particular, the process would involve DOE approving the QA plan and submitting it to NRC for review. If the staff found no major deficiency with the plan, DOE would audit the program for implementation. The NRC staff would observe the audit. If DOE found no significant deficiencies in the QA program, it would notify the NRC that it had accepted the program. Once NRC receives the DOE letter it will issue its own acceptance letter within seven days if the program and audit were acceptable to NRC. Following the acceptance of the program, DOE would provide a schedule of future audits and surveillances so that the staff could ensure that DOE would continuously monitor implementation of the program.

With respect to the July 6 and 7, 1989 design control meeting, three areas were covered. First, the Site Characterization Analysis (SCA) draft point papers were discussed in order to help DOE understand the staff's position on the exploratory shaft facility (ESF) design and design control process (DCP). Also discussed was the DOE DCP for future ESF design work. And, finally, a discussion among the participants was held on the approach recommended by the NRC staff for its review of the ESF, Title II design process. Based on the information presented at the meeting, the staff is concerned that the risk associated with the present DOE DCP approach involves more extensive backfitting and is greater than the risk associated with a control process that sequentially proceeds with: (1) identifying and incorporating all regulatory requirements; (2) preparing the design; and (3) evaluating the design through a critical design review, before baselining the design and controlling changes. During the meeting, DOE acknowledged that its DCP was riskier than an "ideal" DCP.

In addition to discussing the DCP, the participants also discussed the staff's proposal for reviewing the ESF, Title II design process. In the approach outlined by the staff, emphasis would be placed on addressing concerns with fundamental aspects of the design as early as practicable. During the development of the ESF, Title II design, the staff could review, if it chose, the parts of the design process before DOE completed the next step. This approach will allow the staff an opportunity to review the design process as it progresses rather than wait until the design is complete. DOE indicated that the NRC staff could observe the design process by attending the 30%, 60%, and 90% design package reviews and committed to provide the logic and milestones for its design process to the staff by September 1, 1989 so that mutually agreeable observation points could be established.

If you have any additional questions, please contact the project manager for the meeting, Mr. Joe Holonich. Mr. Holonich can be reached at (301) 492-3403 or FTS 492-3403.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

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

Enclosures:

1. Quality Assurance Meeting Minutes
2. Design Control Meeting Minutes

- 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  
 K. Turner, GAO

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