

Dr. Robert E. Browning MS6 2355

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

JUN 26 1985

Mr. William Purcell, Associate Director
Office of Geologic Repositories
U. S. Department of Energy
Washington, D. C. 20545

Dear Mr. Purcell:

On March 20, 1985, the NRC staff transmitted to DOE its review of the draft environmental assessments (EA's) issued by DOE in support of the site-selection process for the first high level waste geologic repository.

In our comments we identified a number of instances in which DOE did not document all of the pertinent data concerning major siting issues. We recommended that DOE carefully consider and document such information before finalizing the EA's.

Subsequently, we learned of data that we consider may have relevance to estimates of groundwater travel time at Hanford. These data include measurements of long-lived radionuclides, like I-129, in trace concentrations in wells, which may be of use in inferring groundwater behavior in the basalt formations near where the nuclear waste may be emplaced. Attached is a list of two references located by the NRC staff that bear on this subject.

I recommend that, in addressing the NRC comments, DOE pay particular attention to these data. The NRC would be pleased to receive and review any additional pertinent data through our ongoing prelicensing consultation with DOE.

As you are aware, our respective staffs have been meeting to review the development of a DOE document management system which will also serve to support a prompt and efficient licensing process. It may be useful in developing this system to consider the circumstances that led to the absence from the draft EA reference list of the two documents discussed above.

Sincerely,

RE Browning
Robert E. Browning, Director
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Enclosure:
As stated

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REFERENCES

- Brauer, F. P. and H. G. Rieck, Jr., 1973. I(129), Co(60) and Ru(106) Measurements on Water Samples from the Hanford Project Environs, Battelle Pacific Northwest Laboratories, Richland, Washington, 36 p.
- Brauer, F. P. and K. M. McFadden, 1975. I(129), Co(60) and Ru(106) Measurements on Water Samples from the Hanford Project Environs: 1962-1974, Battelle Pacific Northwest Laboratories, Richland, Washington, 26 p. (plus data appendices of 74 pages).