

JAN 10 1983

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Mr. Russell Jim
Yakima Tribal Council
Confederated Tribes and Bands
Yakima Indian Nation
P. O. Box 151
Toppenish, Washington 98948

WM Record File

101.4

WM Project WM-11

Docket No. _____

PDR

LPDR

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Dear Mr. Jim:

This is in response to your letter dated November 23, 1982. In your letter you requested that the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) respond to several questions regarding the Hanford Reservation. It should be noted that the NRC has not concluded that the basalt underlying the Hanford Reservation is better than the basalts that lie elsewhere in the same formation. Our regulations governing the disposal of high-level radioactive wastes (10 CFR 60) require that the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) submit to NRC a Site Characterization Report which includes, among other things, the method by which DOE selected a particular site for characterization.

As you are aware, the DOE submitted a Site Characterization Report to the NRC on November 12, 1982. DOE has stated that the Site Characterization Report provides documentation for the technical questions that have been identified at the site and the plans for resolving them through further site studies. They further note that the document describes the site to be characterized, provides information on the site screening and selection process, and describes the repository design, waste package research and development, and quality assurance efforts. Finally, the document summarizes the alternative geologic media and sites under investigation in the National Waste Terminal Storage Program. Chapter 2 of the Site Characterization Report discusses the site selection process that led DOE to the repository location at the Hanford Reservation.

The NRC staff is currently reviewing the content of the Site Characterization Report. Upon the completion of this staff review, the Director of NRC's Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards will

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I have forwarded a copy of your letter to the Department of Energy for their consideration. I have also enclosed a copy of SECY-82-427 which you requested in your letter. If you should need any further clarification on these matters, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Original Signature

Joseph O. Bunting, Chief
Licensing Process and
Integration Branch
Division of Waste Management

Enclosures:
As stated

OSP

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PDR on delayed basis.

*See previous concurrence

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