

April 28, 2004

Dr. Margaret Chu, Director
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

SUBJECT: U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S OBSERVATION AUDIT
REPORT NO. OAR-04-02, JOINT ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT/
RADIOACTIVE WASTE AUDIT NO. 04-DOE-AU-001 OF THE NATIONAL
SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL PROGRAM

Dear Dr. Chu:

I am transmitting the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Observation Audit Report No. OAR-04-02. This report is about the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Environmental Management (EM) and Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (RW) audit of the National Spent Nuclear Fuels Program (NSNFP) at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory in Idaho Falls, Idaho. The audit team conducted this audit on March 29 – April 1, 2004.

The purpose of this audit was to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of the NSNFP Quality Assurance program implementation of the RW Quality Assurance Requirements and Description (QARD), DOE/RW-0333P, Revision 13. This was a compliance-based audit of the NSNFP Project Management, Project Support, Quality Assurance Support procedures and the QARD Matrix.

The scope of the audit included an evaluation of the NSNFP activities that impact safety or waste isolation with a specific focus on activities that provide input for the Repository License Application.

The NRC Observers (observers) determined that the DOE audit was effective in identifying potential conditions adverse to quality (CAQ) and recommending improvements for the NSNFP activities reviewed. During the conduct of the audit, the audit team reviewed applicable documents, procedures, and activities within the audit scope.

M. Chu

- 2 -

The audit team identified two potential CAQs with the implementation of the NSNFP quality program. The audit team also cited two recommendations for improvement for document control, and two noteworthy practices. Overall, the audit team determined that the NSNFP quality program was satisfactorily implemented and effective.

The observers determined that the audit team was effective in evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of the NSNFP quality program. The observers agreed with the DOE audit team's conclusions, findings, and process improvement recommendations.

A written response to this letter and the enclosed report is not required. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Thomas Matula, of my staff at (301) 415-6700.

Sincerely,

/RA/

C. William Reamer, Director
Division of High-Level Waste Repository Safety
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Enclosure:
NRC AUDIT REPORT NO. OAR-04-02

cc: See attached list

Letter to M. Chu from C.W. Reamer, dated: April 28, 2004

cc:

A. Kalt, Churchill County, NV	A. Elzeftawy, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe
R. Massey, Churchill/Lander County, NV	J. Treichel, Nuclear Waste Task Force
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L. Bradshaw, Nye County, NV	D. Brown, DOE/OCRWM
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S. Lynch, State of NV	R. Boland, Timbisha Shoshone Tribe
P. Guinan, Legislative Counsel Bureau	R. Arnold, Pahrump Paiute Tribe
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cc: (Continued)

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J. Bacoach, Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley

P. Thompson, Duckwater Shoshone Tribe

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D. Feehan, GAO

E. Hiruo, Platts Nuclear Publications

G. Hernandez, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe

K. Finrock, NV Congressional Delegation

P. Johnson, Citizen Alert

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J. Leeds, Las Vegas Indian Center

J. C. Saulque, Benton Paiute Indian Tribe

C. Bradley, Kaibab Band of Southern Paiutes

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G. Hudlow

D. Irwin, Hunton & Williams

M. Chu

- 2 -

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* See previous concurrence

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