



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

DEC 19 1988

NOTE TO: Commissioner Technical Assistants

FROM: James L. Blaha
Assistant for Operations, EDO

SUBJECT: QUESTIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY COMMISSION BRIEFING
ON DECEMBER 20, 1988

Enclosed for your use are possible questions related to the December 20, 1988 briefing of the Commission by the Department of Energy (DOE). The questions are based on issues discussed in the latest Quarterly Progress Report prepared by the staff and on ongoing activities in the high-level waste program. If you require any additional assistance, please contact Joe Holonich on extension 23403.


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Assistant for Operations, EDO

Enclosure: As stated

cc: S. Treby, OGC
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Question 1

It is the understanding of the Commission that DOE has recently awarded a management and operating (M&O) contract to provide overall systems engineering, development, and management services to the Department. Who are the subcontractors involved in this contract? (See attached DOE press release)

Question 2

How do the M&O contractors fit into the current DOE and DOE contractor organization, and what is the schedule for phasing them into the program? What are the roles of the M&O contractors and how do these roles compare with the present prime contractors, such as Weston, Sandia, Livermore, SAIC and the USGS, used in the repository program?

Question 3

Once the M&O contractors begin their work, how will their QA programs fit with and compare to the quality assurance program plans that are presently being used by the prime contractors?

Question 4

In the area of quality assurance, the staff has participated as observers in all of the QA audits of the prime contractors conducted by DOE this year. The staff has found that over the course of the year the conduct of the audits has improved. However, the DOE audit teams continue to find major problems with the implementation of the prime contractor QA plans. Several examples include: (1) many of the prime contractors do not have all the necessary procedures in place; (2) for those procedures that are in place, the contractors are not following many of them; (3) all of the DOE audit teams have found that the prime contractors do not have effective training programs in place; and (4) many of the contractors do not have an effective records management system. What actions are being taken by DOE to not only correct the significant deficiencies identified by the audits but also to ensure complete and proper implementation of the prime contractors' QA programs?

Question 5

How is DOE planning to address the Commission's comments on the June 1988 Draft Mission Plan Amendment?

Question 6

With respect to the Commission's comments on the Draft Mission Plan Amendment, of particular concern was the fact that the Amendment identified a compression of the schedule for near-term activities that could leave DOE insufficient time to develop a complete and high-quality license application. In addition, DOE's October 19, 1988 announcement on delaying sinking of the exploratory shaft facility will further decrease the time available to conduct testing and develop a license application. What impact will the schedule compression have on conducting an adequate testing program and on preparing a complete and high-quality license application?

Question 7

What, if any, major project decisions is DOE making without NRC involvement?

Question 8

In the Commission Information Paper numbered SECY-88-285, the staff presented its regulatory framework for the high-level waste program. Does DOE have any concerns with the regulatory strategy described in SECY-88-285?

Question 9

At a September 29, 1988 meeting between members of the NRC staff and representatives from Savannah River, DOE presented a schedule for NRC review of waste acceptance process (WAP) documents and indicated that any delay by NRC would result in delays in starting the glass factory. The schedules presented by Savannah River were not coordinated with the DOE Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM), nor integrated into OCRWM schedules, and were inconsistent with NRC-OCRWM agreements on the timing of the NRC review of the WAP quality assurance program. What is OCRWM doing to integrate the waste acceptance process and repository program activities?

Question 10

How does DOE consider comments and issues raised by the State of Nevada and affected units of local government?

Question 11

DOE did not agree to schedule workshops on several topics proposed by NRC and related to CDSCP concerns, prior to the SCP. What are the reasons for DOE reluctance to support technical consultations, which results in DOE making decisions and issuing key documents, such as the SCP, without fully understanding and addressing NRC concerns? What does DOE suggest to improve the consultation process?

DOE

NEWS

Radwaste

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 9, 1988

**BECHTEL SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT INC. SELECTED FOR
WASTE PROGRAM'S MANAGEMENT & OPERATING CONTRACT**

Secretary of Energy John S. Herrington today announced the selection of Bechtel Systems Management Inc. for award of a contract to provide overall systems engineering, development and management services to the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM).

Bechtel Systems Management will become DOE's management and operating contractor for overall design and analysis of the nuclear waste management system, aimed at the permanent disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner. The system, being developed under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, as amended, includes a geologic repository, transportation subsystem and pre-emplacment packaging and storage capabilities.

The management and operating (M&O) contract, with an initial term of 10 years, is estimated to involve expenditures of about \$100 million annually.

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Bechtel Systems Management is a new operating company of Bechtel Group Inc. of San Francisco. It will be joined in this effort by the following companies which will be responsible for specific aspects of the program: Westinghouse Electric; Battelle Memorial Institute; Science Applications International Corp.; Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade and Douglas; Dames and Moore; Shannon and Wilson; and Los Alamos Technical Associates.

Bechtel Systems Management will also oversee, coordinate and integrate the work of these companies.

Under terms of the contract, the winning team headed by Bechtel will ensure that work on the nuclear waste management system proceeds in a well structured, systematic manner that meets technical, schedule, cost, safety, environmental, and quality assurance requirements; that the work meets regulatory requirements of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and that it is consistent with applicable DOE orders.

Among its responsibilities, Bechtel will:

-- ensure that site characterization activities proceed smoothly, consistent with the MWPA as amended, at the candidate site for the geologic repository -- Yucca Mountain, Nevada, approximately 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas;

-- support DOE in obtaining necessary permits for the repository and, ultimately, a construction authorization from the NRC;

-- perform repository facility and waste package design and inspection functions; and

-- support DOE in obtaining an NRC license to operate the repository and in preparing for waste acceptance testing and operations.

The contractor assist DOE in managing and integrating the transportation program in support of DOE's responsibilities for the safe, efficient and economic transportation of nuclear waste. It will also provide siting, design and licensing services for a monitored retrievable storage facility, as required.

DOE issued a request for proposals for the M&O contract in October 1987, and held a pre-proposal conference for prospective bidders the following month. The department received three bids for the contract. The other bidders were TRW Environmental Safety Systems Inc. of Fairfax, VA., and Systems Engineering and Management Co., a group formed by Ralph M. Parsons of Pasadena, California, and Stone & Webster Engineering Corp. of Boston.