



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NUCLEAR WASTE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

ACNW 0011

January 26, 1989

The Honorable Lando W. Zech, Jr.
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Chairman Zech:

SUBJECT: WEST VALLEY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

During its sixth meeting, January 23-24, 1989, the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste (ACNW) met with representatives of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), its contractors, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority for a review of the West Valley Demonstration Project. We discussed, among other concerns, the procedures that have been developed and are being applied in solidifying decontaminated supernatant low-level wastes and testing the melter for vitrification of the high-level wastes.

As a result of this review, the Committee concludes that the program is appropriately focused and that the results are favorable. Although there appears to be good communication between the DOE contractors and staff and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff, there may be a need for additional input from the NRC staff in two areas:

1. Acceptance criteria for the vitrified high-level waste, including the enumeration of testing procedures to indicate conformance with these criteria, need to be identified by DOE for the waste producers, and these criteria, in turn, need to be reviewed by the NRC to determine if they are acceptable; and
2. Public health and safety criteria for the facilities and land areas being decontaminated and decommissioned as part of this project need to be established.

We plan to schedule a visit to the West Valley site within the next six months.

We trust these comments are responsive to your request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dade W. Moeller".

Dade W. Moeller
Chairman

January 26, 1989

References:

1. U. S. Department of Energy Report, DOE/NE/44139--15, "West Valley Demonstration Project Plan," January 1989
2. Letter dated August 3, 1988 from R. D. Hurt, U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, to W. W. Bixby, U. S. Department of Energy, regarding comments on the revised West Valley Demonstration Project Plan