

**From:** Oberson, Greg  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 05, 2012 2:46 PM  
**To:** Hanson, Brady D  
**Cc:** 'stephen.urwin@pnnl.gov'  
**Subject:** vacuum drying

B/87

Brady and Steve,

How are you doing? Hope you had a nice July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. I believe I've mentioned that NRC is about to start a project looking at some aspects of vacuum drying SNF canisters. The project will be led by our contractors at Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses (CNWRA) who have long supported NRC on Yucca Mountain and other spent fuel issues. They don't have too much experience looking at vacuum drying in the past so there will be some learning curve. Therefore, I'm doing a bit of scouting to identify individuals who may be available to support this project as an outside consultant to CNWRA. Brady, I've thought you might be able to help or alternatively could give me a contact to someone else at PNNL with the appropriate expertise. The obvious constraints would be a conflict of interest and whether your time would permit.

The general scope of the project is essentially two steps. First we will be gathering some information on the current state of the art for vacuum drying, primarily as used for commercial facilities, but also potentially at DOE facilities as well. We'll accomplish this by accompanying NRC inspections to loading campaigns at a number of facilities around the country. We should have the opportunity to see the equipment, review some documentation, and talk with personnel. I am also trying to arrange visits to Areva/Transnuclear which has a demonstration vacuum drying setup in Aiken and also the TriVis vacuum drying demonstration facility in Alabama. Based on the findings from our information-gathering, the second step of the project will be to assess the feasibility for doing independent testing of vacuum drying by constructing our own system at CNWRA.

The intended duration of the project should be from August through March of next year. Depending on the viability of future work, we would decide how to proceed beyond then. Your level of support would have to be negotiated with CNWRA. I could very roughly estimate ¼ time including travel. I have some contact at other DOE labs so please don't feel obligated to join this activity if it would be an undue burden.

If you can indicate whether you'd be able and willing to consider, that would be great. Then we could bring CNWRA folks into the discussion. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best regards,  
Greg