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WMLL: 202

Mr. R.E.L. Stanford
Utility Nuclear Waste Management Group
Edison Electric Institute
1111 19th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Stanford:

Thank you for your two letters dated September 13, 1982 which contain comments on the waste classification approach in the proposed low-level waste management regulation, 10 CFR Part 61.

In your first letter you expressed concern that certain provisions of 10 CFR Part 61 may become effective before practical methods for demonstrating compliance are in place. You also state that a credible system for implementing waste classification is unavailable today.

As we have discussed, it is the NRC Staff's intention to work closely with potentially affected waste generators to ensure that any difficulties are resolved. As you are aware we have already prepared a draft Branch Technical Position on Waste Classification. We solicited comments from over one hundred key licensees and are now resolving those comments. We plan to publish this Branch Technical Position on Waste Classification at the time 10 CFR Part 61 is published in the Federal Register

We appreciate your offer to discuss the ongoing industry programs related to waste classification and we confirm our meeting with you on November 8, 1982 to review the progress to date. As you are aware, we have participated in discussions on 10 CFR Part 61 with the Utility Nuclear Waste Management Group, with groups from the Atomic Industrial Forum and the Electric Power Research Institute, and with the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Radwaste Committee. We have found these discussions to be productive and will continue them during the 10 CFR Part 61 implementation period.

Our work with the Yankee Atomic Company indicates that the existing procedures at Maine Yankee and Vermont Yankee can be easily adapted as an acceptable waste classification program without significant costs and increased occupational exposures. In fact, at these two stations most of procedures needed for an acceptable waste classification system are already in place. We believe that similar reviews with other reactor

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plant operators might also be performed. These reviews should help provide guidance and enable waste generators to develop practical and acceptable programs for demonstrating compliance. We would appreciate any suggestions you may have regarding specific reactor plants we might work with on a cooperative basis which have conditions representative of other plants.

In your second letter you recommend that a specific statement be added to Section 61.55 which allows the determination of radionuclide quantities by calculation. Your letter was submitted too late to be docketed and considered as a formal comment on 10 CFR Part 61. However, as we have discussed, that is clearly the intent of the proposed final rule which includes a section (61.55(a)(8)) that specifically allows the use of inferential measurements. The final rule is under review by the Commission and we still have the opportunity to make editorial changes that will further clarify intent. We are currently considering your recommendation to further clarify the rule.

We appreciate your interest in this matter and look forward to cooperating with you in ensuring a smooth and effective implementation phase for 10 CFR Part 61 after it is issued. If we can be of further assistance, please contact me at 427-4200.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Robert E. Browning, Deputy Director
Division of Waste Management

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