



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

January 30, 1991

M-32

Project M-32

Thomas J. Rowland, Acting Director  
West Valley Project Office  
Idaho Operations  
U.S. Department of Energy  
P.O. Box 191  
West Valley, NY 14171

Dear Mr. Rowland:

One of the stipulations of the West Valley Demonstration Project Act is that the Department of Energy (DOE) decontaminate and decommission the facilities and hardware used in connection with the Project in accordance with requirements prescribed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). As announced in your Notice of Intent, on January 6, 1989, DOE and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) are co-authoring an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to address options for completion of the West Valley Demonstration Project and closure of the West Valley site. We supported your decision to prepare an EIS and endorsed the scope of study described in the Notice of Intent.

We have met with your staff and contractors several times since then to discuss issues related to site decommissioning and closure. It has become clear to all, in light of the uniqueness and technical complexity of the situation at West Valley, that the closest possible coordination between the Project and NRC on the establishment of decontamination and decommissioning requirements is desirable. We propose that the most efficient way of ensuring close coordination would be for NRC to be designated as a cooperating Federal agency for the site closure EIS.

The purpose of such a designation would be to emphasize that NRC's prescription of decontamination and decommissioning criteria will be coordinated with the EIS process already established by DOE and NYSERDA, and to tie our participation firmly into your schedule for the EIS. The scope of NRC's participation as a cooperating agency would be focused upon one issue: prescription of

decontamination and decommissioning criteria. (In addition, NRC would review and comment on other matters addressed by the EIS in areas of NRC expertise.) Other NRC responsibilities under the Act, such as safety oversight, would not be altered by our status as a cooperating agency for the EIS. Could we meet with you and the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act authorities at DOE to discuss this further?

Sincerely,

Charles J. Haughney, Chief  
Fuel Cycle Safety Branch  
Division of Industrial and  
Medical Nuclear Safety  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

cc: T. DeBoer, NYSERDA

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[RDH/DECONTAMINATION]

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