

MR. BEVILL: Does the Commission have any concerns about its ability to maintain a proper relationship with DOE during the licensing process, particularly with regard to work with DOE in order to improve the quality assurance aspects of the DOE program.

CHAIRMAN CARR:

The NRC does not have any concerns about its ability to maintain a proper relationship with DOE during the prelicensing or licensing phase of the High-Level Waste repository. With regard to the quality assurance aspects of the DOE program, NRC has and will continue to adhere to the principals of the Ford Amendment Study, NUREG-1055, "Improving Quality and the Assurance of Quality in the Design and Construction of Nuclear Power Plants" which calls for placing the responsibility for achieving and assuring the quality and reliability of the facility to be licensed on the license applicant which in this case is DOE. NRC has provided guidance to DOE through prelicensing consultations, meetings, document reviews, and observations of DOE audits and surveillances. However, NRC has strongly maintained that it is the responsibility of DOE to develop its QA program. It is only after DOE has officially notified NRC of its approval of the QA program that NRC will take an independent position on the acceptability of the program. NRC has also stressed to DOE that a successful QA program is the cornerstone of the licensing process because it is the way in which DOE can ensure the acceptability of the scientific data that will be used in the licensing process.

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