



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

July 5, 1996

Mr. Ronald A. Milner, Director
for Program Management and Integration
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
U.S. Department of Energy, RW 30
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF THE MAY 22-23, 1996, TECHNICAL EXCHANGE ON THE RESULTS OF
THE U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION AUDIT REVIEW OF THE U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY 1995 TOTAL SYSTEM PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Dear Mr. Milner:

The purpose of this letter is to transmit the summary for the May 22-23, 1996, technical exchange between the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Representatives from the State of Nevada, affected-units-of-local-government (Clark and Nye Counties, Nevada), the U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste, the Electric Power Research Institute, and DOE program participants also participated in the technical exchange.

The primary goal of the technical exchange was to proceed towards issue resolution, through presentations and discussions, of the results of the recently completed audit review of DOE's *1995 Total System Performance Assessment* for a proposed repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. In order to achieve this goal, the focus of the technical exchange was to compare and contrast the respective NRC and DOE total system performance assessment approaches (assumptions, abstractions, process models, data, etc.) so as to better understand those aspects of the analysis of the site and design that are most important to repository performance.

At this technical exchange, the staff and DOE introduced a new meeting format which included "break-out" sessions in which smaller working groups discussed specific questions and technical issues and a closing summary session in which the results of the break-out sessions were reported. Based on the discussions held during the technical exchange, both the NRC and DOE staffs agreed that this format more successfully facilitated focused discussions, than the formats followed in past technical exchanges. Moreover, the NRC staff believes that this type of meeting format was successful in demonstrating progress towards improved issue definition. In this regard, we believe that this format helped to assess and identify the measures necessary to reach closure, at the staff levels, of key performance issues. A principal outcome of the technical exchange was the mutual recognition of the need for more focussed interactions in the future, in specific areas, as either technical exchanges, Appendix 7 visits, or telephone conference calls.

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If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Michael P. Lee of my staff. Mr. Lee can be reached at (301) 415-6677.

Sincerely,

/S/ [Original signed by J. Thoma For J. Austin]
John H. Austin, Chief
Performance Assessment and HLW
Integration Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Enclosure: As stated

cc: R. Loux, State of Nevada
B. Price, Nevada Legislative Committee
J. Meder, Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau
W. Barnes, YMPO
C. Einberg, DOE/Washington, DC
M. Murphy, Nye County, NV
M. Baughman, Lincoln County, NV
D. Bechtel, Clark County, NV
D. Weigel, GAO
P. Niedzielski-Eichner, Nye County, NV
B. Mettam, Inyo County, CA
V. Poe, Mineral County, NV
W. Cameron, White Pine County, NV
R. Williams, Lander County, NV
L. Fiorenzi, Eureka County, NV
J. Hoffman, Esmeralda County, NV
C. Schank, Churchill County, NV
L. Bradshaw, Nye County, NV
W. Barnard, NWTRB
R. Holden, NCAI
A. Melendez, NIEC
S. Brocoum, YMPO
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Mr. R.A. Milner

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John O. Thoma for

John H. Austin, Chief
Performance Assessment and HLW
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