



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

MAY 28 2004

Dr. Mark Abkowitz
Chairman
Panel on the Waste Management System
United States Nuclear Waste Technical
Review Board
2300 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Dr. Abkowitz:

Thank you for your March 29, 2004, letter in which you provided comments on information presented by the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM). That information was presented during the January 21, 2004, Waste Management System Panel Meeting on transportation strategic planning.

We appreciate your interest in OCRWM's approach to transportation planning. Your questions regarding interaction with stakeholders, waste acceptance, transportation infrastructure and interfaces, cask procurement, security planning, emergency preparedness, and operational lessons learned from previous and ongoing DOE shipment campaigns are all important. We are incorporating many of your comments and concerns as we continue to develop the transportation system.

Some of the issues you've raised are being addressed in a comprehensive fashion currently. Others will be addressed comprehensively after critical milestones are achieved that support subsequent detailed planning. We believe our discussions during the Board's Spring Meeting in Washington, D.C., on May 18-19, 2004 were useful for us, and hope you found them helpful as well. We believe that our presentation at that meeting described the areas where we are able to do detailed planning, as well as the areas where we are managing to milestones prior to having detailed project scope, schedules and resources identified. We believe those discussions addressed most of the comments made in your letter. As we proceed with our planning for transportation, we will be interested in the Technical Review Board's views on the technical issues we will be addressing.

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OCRWM places a great emphasis on working with our stakeholders, including the Technical Review Board, collaboratively throughout the planning process. We are looking forward to more productive discussions at the fall Transportation Panel Meeting in Salt Lake City. In the meantime, please contact Gary Lanthrum, my transportation Office Director, to discuss that meeting, or other technical aspects of transportation system development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Chu', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Margaret S.Y. Chu, Ph.D.
Director
Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management