



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD
2300 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1300
Arlington, VA 22201

December 4, 2003

Dr. Margaret S. Y. Chu
Director
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Dr. Chu:

The Board has decided to conduct two panel meetings on January 20 and 21, 2004, in Las Vegas, rather than the full Board meeting that was scheduled for the same week and location. Specifically, the Board's Panel on the Engineered System will conduct a meeting on Tuesday, January 20, and the Board's Panel on the Waste Management System will conduct a meeting on Wednesday, January 21. Both meetings will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Principal topics that will be considered at the Engineered System Panel meeting will be waste-package corrosion, environment on waste package surfaces, and design. The focus of the Waste Management System Panel will be issues related to the transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste.

Since OCRWM's appropriation for FY2004 is now settled, we very much would appreciate an update from you on OCRWM's current activities and plans for the remainder of the fiscal year. Because it appears that all Board members will be at the January 20 meeting, we would prefer to have your update then if that is convenient for you.

Panel on the Engineered System

In an October 21, 2003, letter to you, the Board expressed its serious concerns about the potential of waste-package corrosion during the thermal pulse. On November 25, 2003, the Board sent you a report discussing the technical basis for the Board's concerns and other topics. We would like the DOE to take as much time as you think necessary at the January 20 meeting to address the issues in these two documents. The specific subject areas to be addressed would be up to you. They could include, for example, corrosion data obtained since Spring 2003 and plans for obtaining additional corrosion data, amplification of the deliquescence discussion at last May's Board meeting, plans for analyses of airborne dusts or ECRB dusts, responses to the Board's concerns about temperature and relative humidity calculations, etc. Time permitting, we would also appreciate updates on the waste package prototype program, surface and subsurface facility design (particularly recent changes and ground support design), waste package/drip

shield/emplacment pallet/invert/engineered barrier system design, and other design topics the DOE is prepared to discuss. Dr. Ron Latanision, who chairs the Panel on the Engineered System, will chair this panel meeting. Dr. Carl Di Bella is the staff member coordinating this meeting for the Board.

Panel on the Waste Management System

The transportation meeting will focus on strategic planning considerations related to the potential shipment of commercial spent fuel and high-level waste to Yucca Mountain. The purpose of the meeting is to hear directly from key stakeholders who could have operational or oversight responsibilities for the safety and/or security of such shipments at some point during loading, in-transit, and/or unloading activities. Speakers will be asked to address the following questions:

1. What are your key Yucca Mountain transportation safety and security concerns?
2. How have you been able to address these concerns based on the information and resources that the DOE has provided to date?
3. What concerns have you been unable to address? What does the DOE need to provide to allow this to happen?
4. How long will it take you to address these outstanding concerns once the DOE has provided what you need?

We plan to invite speakers who are knowledgeable about all aspects of a Yucca Mountain transportation system, including representatives of utilities, truck and rail operators, cask manufacturers, state and local governments, and veterans of previous shipping campaigns. We request two presentations by the DOE: one on the interface between the transportation system and Yucca Mountain surface facilities, and another overview presentation of the status of DOE transportation planning. Dr. Mark Abkowitz, member of the Panel on the Waste Management System, will chair this panel meeting. Dr. Dan Fehringer is the staff member coordinating this meeting for the Board.

We are looking forward to two days of very interesting and productive meetings.

Sincerely,



Michael L. Corradini
Chairman