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Board Discusses Proposed Repository Sealing Program Tours Tunnel-Boring Machine Factory

As part of its congressional mandate to independently review the Department of Energy's (DOE) civilian high-level radioactive waste management program, the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board's Panel on Structural Geology & Geoen지니어ing has scheduled a meeting with representatives of the DOE and its contractors for November 12 and 13, 1991, in Seattle, Washington. Panel members will review the DOE's plans for sealing and backfilling repository boreholes, shafts, tunnels, and underground openings. The DOE currently is characterizing a site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, to determine its potential suitability for locating a permanent repository for the disposal of civilian spent fuel and some high-level defense waste. The meeting on repository sealing, which will be held at the Wyndham Garden Hotel, 18118 Pacific Highway South, Seattle, Washington (206-244-6666), will run from 8:30 A.M. - 5:30 P.M. on November 12 and from 8:30 A.M. - 11:30 A.M. on November 13. During the afternoon of November 13, panel members will tour The Robbins Company, the world's largest manufacturer of tunnel-boring machines.

On Tuesday, November 12, panel members will be briefed on the status of the proposed repository sealing program. Presentations will focus on the program's history, regulatory requirements, design philosophy, sealing concepts, and the rationale for these concepts. Following discussions will center on the technical requirements of sealing and the development of a numerical model of the permeability of the zone surrounding the openings of the proposed repository. The model's purpose is to demonstrate sealing performance in response to potential water flow into the repository, and potential gaseous flow out of the repository or around sealed and backfilled boreholes, shafts, tunnels, and underground openings. Later, discussions will be devoted to plans for future studies.

On Wednesday, November 13, discussion will focus on the materials selection process, seal degradation, and proposed field test efforts. After lunch, transportation will depart from the Wyndham Garden Hotel for The Robbins Company, which is located at 2244 76th Avenue South, Kent, Washington 98031. Interested attendees can join panel members on this half-day tour.

Transcripts of the meeting will be available on a library-loan basis from Victoria Reich, Board librarian, beginning December 4, 1991.