

January 23, 2002

Asadul H. Chowdhury,
Manager, Mining, Geotechnical,
and Facility Engineering
Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses
6220 Culebra Road, P.O. Drawer 28510
San Antonio, TX 78228-5166

Subject: REPOSITORY DESIGN AND THERMAL-MECHANICAL EFFECTS KEY
TECHNICAL ISSUE INTERMEDIATE MILESTONE NO. 20-01402.671.260:
PROGRESS REPORT

Dear Dr. Chowdhury:

I have reviewed the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses's (CNWRA's) Progress Report entitled, "DECOVALEX III, TASK 2C, Thermal-Mechanical Modeling of the Drift-Scale Heater Test at Yucca Mountain -- A Progress Report," dated December 18, 2001. The report presents work plan for Subtask 2C activities including technical approach, models to be used, scope and schedule. The technical approach and work plan presented in the progress report are consistent with my understanding of what needs to be done and in agreement with the discussions I have had with you and your staff. I do not have any comments on the contents of the report at this time other than to note that: (1) all input parameters that will be used in the analyses must be supportable based on the available data; and (2) all output obtained from the analyses must be amenable to comparison with data gathered by the Department of Energy drift-scale heater test.

As you know the next Task Force meeting of the DECOVALEX Project will be held in February in Rockville, Maryland. I expect that sufficient progress will be made under this activity before the Task Force meeting so that our findings can be shared not only with the Task Force members, but also with the interested NRC staff and management. I expect to hold detailed discussions with Sui-Min Hsiung and Ronald Green of your staff on a continuous basis during the next several weeks to chalk out a good presentation in February.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, you may contact me at (301) 415-6695 or via e-mail (msn1@nrc.gov). No written response to this letter is required and the subject report is considered to fulfill CNWRA's contractual obligations for this Intermediate Milestone.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Mysore Nataraja,
Program Element Manager

Asadul H. Chowdhury,
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and Facility Engineering
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Sincerely,
/RA/
Mysore Nataraja,
Program Element Manager

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