

September 17, 2003

MEMORANDUM TO: Janet Schlueter, Chief
High Level Waste Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards

FROM: Timothy Kobetz, Senior Project Manager **/RA/**
Projects and Engineering Section
High Level Waste Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF THE SEPTEMBER 3, 2003, MEETING BETWEEN THE
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION STAFF, COGEMA,
FRAMATONE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

On September 3, 2003, staff from the Division of Waste Management (DWM) met with representatives from Cogema, Framatone, and the Department of Energy (DOE). The purpose of the meeting was to provide NRC with an overview of the design and operation of the La Hague spent fuel transfer facility in France. DOE has contracted with Cogema and Framatone to design a spent fuel transfer facility, and other structures, for use at the proposed Yucca Mountain geologic repository. The meeting focused on the technologies used at La Hague but not how those technologies may apply to Yucca Mountain. Attachment 1 contains an attendance list for the meeting.

The meeting consisted of a formal presentation by Cogema followed by staff questions. Attachment 2 contains the presentation slides. In addition, a video was shown which contained proprietary information. Members of the public were allowed to stay during the viewing of the video; however, the video will not be docketed. If members of the public wish to view the video in the future they should contact Robert Edmunds, Framatone, at 704-805-2080.

La Hague is a spent nuclear fuel (SNF) reprocessing complex which processes approximately 1700 metric tons of SNF per year. The SNF has typically been cooled for 6-10 years. The complex consists of approximately 30 waste handling facilities. Dry and wet SNF handling facilities were commissioned in 1986 and 1981, respectively.

The staff made the following observations during the meeting:

- SNF is shipped to La Hague in standardized shipping packages which have bolted closures.
- No cutting operations are required to open a shipping package
- Remote welding of canisters is performed at La Hague for packages containing solid wastes; however, no non-destructive testing is performed on the welds. Instead, the integrity of the weld is verified by maintaining strict weld parameters and controls during the welding process.

- No accidents at the facility have resulted in a radioactive release beyond regulatory limits.
- Wet unloading of casks is the preferred method to remove damaged SNF from a cask.
- The facilities are taken out-of-service for approximately one month each year for maintenance.

Once DOE has accepted a design for the SNF transfer facilities at Yucca Mountain from Cogema and Framatone the staff will meet with DOE to discuss the design details.

No regulatory decisions or commitments were made by NRC during the meeting.

Attachments: 1. Attendance List
2. Cogema Handout

- No accidents at the facility have resulted in a radioactive release beyond regulatory limits.
- Wet unloading of casks is the preferred method to remove damaged SNF from a cask.
- The facilities are taken out-of-service for approximately one month each year for maintenance.

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Attachment 1

Attendance List

**September 3, 2003, Meeting
Between the Nuclear Regulatory Commission,
Cogema, Framatone, and the Department of Energy**

ATTENDANCE LIST

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Tim Kobetz	NRC/NMSS/DWM
Blair Spitzberg	NRC/Region IV/DNMS
Robert K. Johnson	NRC/NMSS/DWM
Bakr Ibrahim	NRC/NMSS/DWM
Banad Jagannath	NRC/NMSS/DWM
Ted Carter	NRC/NMSS/DWM
Dennis Galvin	NRC/NMSS/DWM
Rob Temps	NRC/NMSS/SFPO
Wilkins Smith	NRC/NMSS/FCSS
Scott Gordon	NRC/NMSS/FCSS
Andrew Persinko	NRC/NMSS/FCSS
W. B. Gloersen	NRC/Region II/DNMS
James Isom	NRC/NRR/DIPM
Ian Hunter	Transnuclear
Frederic Bailly	Cogema
Bob Edmunds	AREVA/Framatone
John Vincent	Nuclear Energy Institute
Joe Price	DOE/OLAS
Andrew Griffith	DOE/NE
David Siefken	PMC
Maureen Conley	McGraw Hill