



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
 REC
 IDAHO OPERATIONS OFFICE
 1435 N. BOISE AVENUE
 BOISE, IDAHO 83725

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 1010

FAX TRANSMITTAL

of pages 2

To: Beth Sellers	From: Jim Wartz
Dept./Agency	Phone #
Fax #	Fax #

NSN 7540-01-217-7388

5010-101

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

December 5, 2003

Ms. Elizabeth D. Sellers, Manager
 U.S. Department of Energy
 Idaho Operations Office
 850 Energy Drive
 Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear Ms. Sellers:

I received your November 26, 2003 letter written in response to a series of meetings and conference calls between the Department of Energy (DOE), Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency, concerning a new path forward towards achieving cost efficient cleanup of the Rocky Flats Plant wastes buried at the Subsurface Disposal Area (SDA) at the Idaho Nuclear Engineering and Environmental Lab (INEEL).

EPA agrees that DOE's current design path for the first Transuranic (TRU) waste large-scale retrieval at the SDA needs further review. We sincerely hope that the lessons learned at DOE facilities like Rocky Flats and their excavation of the 903 Pad can be applied to the SDA retrievals. We understand that finding the appropriate balance between possible safety concerns vs costs vs schedule is needed in order to achieve our mutual objective of reducing the risks posed by the shallow land burial of the Rocky Flats Plant wastes at the SDA.

We support the reprogramming of current design resources as described in your letter, including:

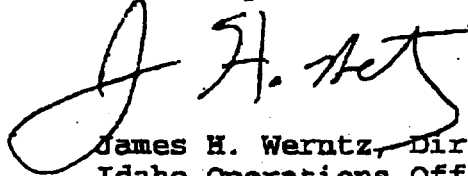
- * Retrieval design-related work
 - Work to support acceptance of retrieved transuranic waste at WIPP, including development of acceptable knowledge,
 - Development of a Preliminary Documented Safety Analysis for retrieving buried waste more efficiently,
 - Development of a Pre-Conceptual Design for a more efficient approach to buried waste retrieval in the SDA.
- * Drainage improvements to reduce water infiltration through waste zones and contaminated areas.

* Isolation and drying of beryllium blocks to reduce migration of Carbon-14.

With regard to DOE's request for a 6-month extension to the Stage III milestone, we do not agree that a schedule extension is warranted at this time, pursuant to the terms of the Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order. In our view, there is adequate time to complete the 10% design by the September, 2005 milestone. Therefore, EPA denies this request.

Please contact me at (208) 378-5743 if you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. H. Wertz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

James H. Wertz, Director
Idaho Operations Office

cc: Steve Allred, IDEQ
Kathleen Trevor, IDEQ
Mike Gearheard, EPA-10