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Department of Energy

Nevada Operations Office

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Aerospace

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SEP 16 1983

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DISPOSAL OF LIQUID RADIOACTIVE WASTE--NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE

Layton O'Neill and Thomas Graham of my office recently visited two sites at Nellis AFB, Area II, identified as locations for burial of radioactive waste. The purpose of this visit was to visually inspect the physical status of the sites, one identified as the location of the subject liquid wastes.

Numerous readings were made with a hand-held Ludlum Model 125 Micro-R meter, for the purpose of personnel radiation protection walking into the controlled, posted radioactive waste compounds. No readings were above background.

We have also reviewed an analysis of the water removed from the tank and analyzed by USAF personnel. Consideration of the above observations, and review of several maps and documents provided to us by Dean Daily, Base Environmental Engineer, have led us to the following conclusions:

1. There is no evidence provided to us other than the posting, the documents, and the history of the sites as burial sites for unspecified radioactive waste, that any man-made or enhanced radioactive gamma sources are present in the sites visited. The water analysis appears negative.
2. It is not likely that low levels of radioactive materials from weapons-related activities would be detectable by use of the Micro-R meter, and caution must be used in interpreting the negative findings.
3. The liquid sample was obtained in such a manner that activity in sediments at the bottom of the tank, attached to the tank, or in the earth surrounding the tank were probably not represented.
4. Extensive excavation and sampling would be required to assess radioactivity, if any, deposited in either of these sites or their environs.

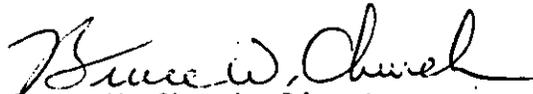
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5. Because of the controlled nature of the sites, no hazard to the public exists.

Unless specific requests for assistance are made to us regarding disposal of the subject materials, there is no further action contemplated at this time. If there is any interest on your part in specific sampling or advisory capabilities of the Department of Energy, Nevada Operations Office, please contact us.


Bruce W. Church, Director
Health Physics Division

HPD/ROB:TAG-80

CC:

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