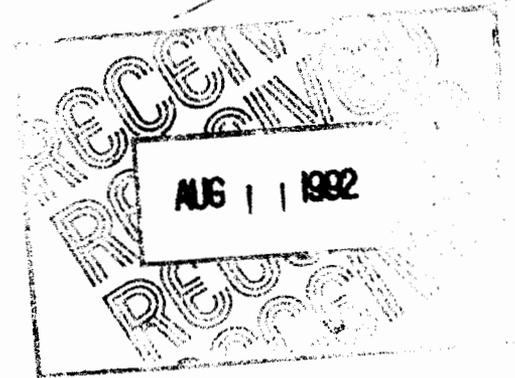




Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

JUL 30 1992



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Mr. Benito Garcia
New Mexico Environment Department
Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau
State of New Mexico
Harold Runnels Building
1190 St. Francis Dr.
P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, NM 87502

RE: Comments on the Predecisional Environmental Restoration and
Waste Management Five-Year Plan for FY 1994-1998

Dear Mr. Garcia:

Thank you for your comments and recommendations regarding the predecisional FY 1994-1998 Five-Year Plan (FYP). Your comments were interesting and informative. When possible, we have revised the plan to reflect your recommendations. Your comments, as well as other comments received on the predecisional draft, are discussed in an appendix of the preliminary plan, which we expect to be published later this summer. I would like to take this opportunity to discuss with you how your comments are being addressed.

Your comments were specific and detailed. Rather than reiterate each individual recommendation here, I would like to assure you that we have strived to adequately address every comment submitted in your letter and revise the plan where appropriate. For example, the draft read, "All sites are maintaining safe and regulatory-compliance storage..." (p. I-102). You maintained that this statement was inaccurate. In response, we revised the language to read, "All sites are striving to maintain safe and regulatory compliant storage of the TRU waste inventory."

In another example, you pointed out that a statement regarding mined geologic disposal (I-103) was not supported in the text of the FYP, and that there are several citizens groups in New Mexico that would be alarmed by this statement. In response, we have revised the sentence to read, "Mined geologic disposal such as the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), as opposed to continued aboveground storage, should provide a much greater level of confidence for long-term protection." Further details were added (p. I-105) to support your recommendations:

In addition, DOE will continue to maintain cooperation with regulatory agencies involved in the oversight of WIPP.

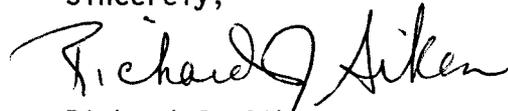
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These groups include the Environmental Protection Agency, the New Mexico Environment Department, the Mine Safety and Health Administration, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (for transportation)."

Your extensive and specific list of comments has been addressed, one by one, similarly to the examples provided above, and the changes have resulted in a better, more realistic FYP. Again, many thanks for your comments. Your views are important to the FYP development process. If you have any further questions or comments, please call me at (202) 586-4373.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard J. Aiken". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".

Richard J. Aiken
Director
Office of Planning
Environmental Restoration
and Waste Management