



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

August 10, 2001

OFFICE OF
AIR AND RADIATION

Don Hancock
SRIC
P.O. Box
Albuquerque, NM 87106



Dear Mr. Hancock

Thank you for your letter of August 3, 2001, regarding the Waste Assay Gamma Spectrometer (WAGS) system at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL). We have placed your letter in the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Air Docket (No. A-98-49, Item II-A3-27). We are considering the comments made in your letter in the inspection report we are developing for the WAGS system.

In your letter, you requested an extension of the current comment period, which closes on August 13, 2001. The comment period established under 40 CFR Part 194.8 is intended to provide the public with the opportunity to present concerns and questions that they would like EPA to consider in making a compliance decision. EPA is following this established procedure for the WAGS system. We believe that 30 days is sufficient time to allow the public to raise questions, as demonstrated by your letter.

We are confident that, through our inspection, we have gathered the information necessary to address the concerns you raised. As always, if evidence of a compliance concern is identified by EPA or others after we have issued our inspection report and compliance decision, we will consider these concerns and take appropriate measures to resolve and address them.

Your letter also requested that additional information about the INEEL nonconformance and the WAGS system be placed in EPA's docket. As with previous waste characterization inspections, we have docketed relevant information about the equipment and waste that is being inspected. As we explained in our May 1998 certification decision, EPA's compliance decision under 40 CFR Part 194.8 must be based on our independent inspections of waste characterization

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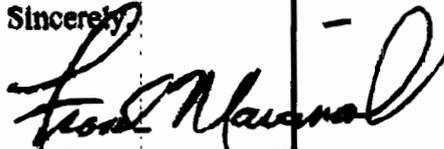
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processes (see, for example, A-93-02, Item V-C-1, pp. 2-8 to 2-11). Inspections involve review of many different documents, interviews with staff, and on-site demonstrations, which are then summarized and made public in our inspection reports.

The information that we docketed were documents that we determined were most pertinent to the proposed equipment (WAGS). In light of the WAGS related nonconformance that we had already identified, and in anticipation of public concern, we also included additional DOE documents that directly pertained to the nonconformance.

I appreciate your comments on the recent events at INEEL. Your comments will be considered as we determine whether or not to approve the WAGS system at INEEL. Please call Scott Monroe of my staff at (202) 564-9712 if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Frank Marcinowski, Director
Radiation Protection Division