



August 1st, 2003

Dr. Inés Triay
Department of Energy Manager
Carlsbad Field Office
4021 National Parks Highway
Carlsbad, NM 88221



Dear Dr. Triay,

This letter is prompted by a deep concern over statements made by your staff. During the 83rd WIPP Quarterly meeting held in Santa Fe on July 29th, Dr. Roger Nelson made a statement that appeared both disingenuous and detrimental to the public process.

A question was posed over the possibility of public access to the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Remote-Handled Transuranic Waste (RH TRU) demonstration being held August 5-7. Dr. Nelson responded to the question by stating that the only persons allowed to attend were those with "Q" clearance.

We were shocked to hear this response for two reasons in particular:

1. Nowhere in the RH TRU permit modification request (PMR) does it state that there will be classified wastes. If there are no classified RH TRU wastes in the complex, why would anyone need Q-clearance in order to observe the RH demonstration?
2. If there are RH TRU classified wastes in the complex why is this not mentioned in the PMR? We expect that the Department of Energy (DOE) will not be shipping classified RH TRU wastes if the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) eventually approves of the PMR. Furthermore, we would appreciate an expected timeline from Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) for its plans to submit a PMR for the disposal of classified RH TRU wastes.

Our concerns are clear. If there is classified RH TRU wastes in the complex, why is this not mentioned in the RH TRU PMR? If there are no classified RH TRU wastes, why would Dr. Nelson state publicly that only Q-cleared persons would be able to attend the demonstration at LANL? Finally, we request the schedule for the RH TRU demonstration and an explanation as to whether or not the public will be allowed to attend. If the public is allowed at the demonstration, we request the contact information for the person organizing it so that we may make arrangements to attend. We would appreciate a timely response to our concerns.

Sincerely,
Joni Arends, Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety
Jay Coghlan & Geoff Petrie, Nuclear Watch of New Mexico
Don Hancock, Southwest Research and Information Center

Cc:
Sandra Martin, NMED
Steve Zappe, NMED
Roger Nelson, DOE

