



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

JUL 2008

OFFICE OF  
AIR AND RADIATION

David C. Moody, PhD, Manager  
Carlsbad Field Office  
Department of Energy  
P.O. Box 3090  
Carlsbad, NM 88221



Dear Dr. Moody:

On May 29, 2008, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) received the Department of Energy's (DOE) "Transuranic (TRU) Waste Acceptance Criteria (WAC) for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Revision 6.2, DOE/WIPP-02-3122" for review. In your letter, you referred to the document as an informational copy. While DOE may initiate a change to the WAC at any time, EPA is required to concur in those changes that affect or may relate to the waste characterization process required by EPA prior to their implementation. In effect, this means that all changes to the WAC affecting radiological waste characterization or the determination of waste material parameters must be sent to EPA for concurrence.

EPA had previously expressed concern about performing limited VE in lieu of RTR for solids waste streams by issuing findings at the baselines inspections of both Savannah River Site-Central Characterization Project (CCP) (EPA issue SRS-CCP-VE-05-001F) and at Los Alamos National Laboratory-CCP (EPA issue LANL-CCP-VE-06-004F). The changes made to section G.3 make permanent changes to address the above findings so EPA concurs with these changes.

During EPA's TRU site inspections, EPA inspectors have expressed concerns about incomplete identification of waste material parameters (WMPs) (namely, cellulose, plastic, and rubber) when DOE staff perform visual examination of TRU waste. A more descriptive and detailed identification of items in the waste container is essential to accurately report WMPs in each TRU waste container emplaced in the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). Inadequate identification of WMPs could impact the total WMPs in the emplaced waste calculated for DOE's WIPP performance assessments (PA).

Since the waste material parameters are an important part of performance assessment and compliance, the phrase "shall clearly identify **all** [emphasis added] discernible waste items" on page G.1 of Appendix G of Revision 6.2 of the WAC needs to be better defined/described. This is necessary to emphasize the need for more accurate identification and reporting of all items contributing to estimation of WMP contents by

080710



non-destructive examination (NDE) personnel. During recent EPA baseline inspections, EPA inspectors have identified this concern upon observing that NDE procedures are not explicit. Waste characterization personnel at TRU sites are not aware of the importance of accurate and complete identification of WMP contents of TRU waste containers to WIPP compliance and may not capture all of the items as required. At this time, EPA is requiring that the WAC language be improved to emphasize the importance of complete and accurate identification of waste material parameters in individual TRU waste containers destined for WIPP disposal. EPA must review changes made to the text in Appendix G of the WAC, Rev 6.2, to respond to the above issue before EPA can concur with the WAC, Rev 6.2. EPA will evaluate its implementation at the next EPA inspection.

Thank you for providing us with an opportunity to review the Revision 6.2 of the WAC. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Rajani Joglekar (202-343-9462) or Ed Felcorn (202-343-9422).

Sincerely,



Tom Peake, Director  
Center for Waste Management and Regulation

cc: (Electronic Distribution)  
Jon Edwards  
Frank Marcinowski, DOE EM  
Alton Harris DOE EM  
Vernon Daub, CBFO  
Casey Gadbury, CBFO  
Courtland Fesmire, CBFO  
J. R. Stroble, CBFO  
Norma Castaneda, CBFO  
Ava Holland, CBFO  
Martin Navarrete, CBFO  
Dennis Miehl, CBFO  
Allison, Pangle, CTAC  
Wayne Ledford, CTAC  
Steve Zappe, NMED