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**Department of Energy**  
Richland Operations Office  
P.O. Box 550  
Richland, Washington 99352

APR 01 1997



Mr. Steve M. Alexander  
Perimeter Areas Section Manager  
Nuclear Waste Program  
State of Washington  
Department of Ecology  
1315 W. 4th Avenue  
Kennewick, Washington 99336

Dear Mr. Alexander:

**N BASIN SEDIMENT CHARACTERIZATION SCHEDULE STATUS**

Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order (Tri-Party Agreement) Target Date Milestone M-16-01E-T3 is a target date that supports interim Milestone M-16-01E for N Area Deactivation. The target date establishes that characterization of N Basin sediment must be completed by April 30, 1997. N Reactor deactivation activities have undergone a 9½ month suspension due to Authorization Basis Issues, which began on May 7, 1996. The Remotely Operated Sediment Extraction Equipment and Low Dose Hardware Removal activities, which are critical path activities, recently recommenced on February 24, 1997, after receipt of approval of the Authorization Basis on December 18, 1996, by the U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office (RL), and subsequent successful completion of both a Bechtel Hanford, Inc. and RL Operational Readiness Review.

The N Area Project has put together a recovery schedule, as documented in the FY1997 Baseline, which has reduced the impact of the work suspension by several months. The Baseline schedule shows the project completion date extending past the September 30, 1997, interim milestone M-16-01E date; however, the project is continuing to make project enhancements with the objective of meeting the September 30, 1997, completion date. If schedule recovery hasn't been experienced by 120 days prior to the interim milestone due date, the State of Washington Department of Ecology will be notified by RL as required. In the interim, the critical path schedule shows N Basin sediment characterization to be completed by June 30, 1997. Section 12.2 of the Action Plan for the Tri-Party Agreement requires a Change Control Form for target date deferrals of greater than 60 days, therefore, no Tri-Party Agreement Change Control Form has been generated for Target Date Milestone M-16-01E-T3 at this time.

Mr. Steve Alexander

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If you have any questions, please call me at 376-3721.

Sincerely,

*Heather R. Trumble*

Heather R. Trumble, Project Manager  
N Area Project

NAP:HRT

cc: M. K. Harmon, EM-442  
T. E. Logan, BHI  
D. R. Sherwood, EPA  
P. R. Staats, Ecology