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060948 2121 Briarwood Court
Richland, Washington 99352
July 28, 1998

Richard Holten
U.S. Department of Energy
Federal Building
Richland, Washington 99352

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DOE-RL/DIS

Dear Rich,

On P. 6 of the meeting minutes for the GW/VZ weekly project meeting on July 20, 1998, there is a statement that certain stakeholders have interceded in the expert panel selection process to express disapproval of some candidates; I cannot recall that statement, but I certainly find it disturbing.

The selection process was carefully formulated to ensure impartiality. Opening the process to intercession by any stakeholder group seriously compromises the integrity of the process; opening the process to some groups without providing an opportunity for all groups to intercede fatally discredits the integrity of the panel selection process and seriously compromises the credibility of any meaningful, constructive relationships between the GW/VZ project and stakeholders.

This act of intercession, coupled with Mike Graham's remark at the July 27th meeting that the panel may have as many as 12 members, makes it clear that the process has become politicized. Since there is no doubt that the use of a standing "expert" panel chosen by a political selection process will be wasteful and counter-productive, I recommend strongly that the concept be discarded and that ad hoc expert panels be convened only when deemed necessary by project management, with guidance provided by stakeholders acting solely in an appropriate advisory capacity.

Yours truly,

Martin S. Bensky
Martin Bensky

cc:
Gordon Rogers
Tom Page
Michael Graham
Stakeholder Group Representatives

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