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**National Association of Neighborhoods
1651 Fuller Street, Northwest
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August 10, 2001

The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Abraham:

2001-019779 Aug 27 p 3:28

Open Yucca Mountain!

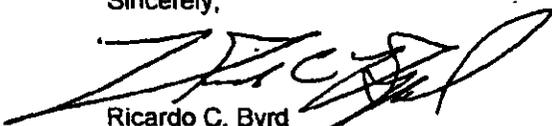
As you well know, the delay of the Department of Energy to open a centralized federal repository for used nuclear fuel has caused most nuclear plants to use a so-called "Plan B." This plan calls for nuclear power generating facilities to store used nuclear fuel on site because spent fuel pools are full.

It appears that many nuclear power plants are resorting to "dry cask" storage of used nuclear fuel in places that were never designed or engineered for this purpose. This temporary storage plan was not envisioned by anyone to be the answer to this vexing challenge. However, what is now a temporary answer is fast becoming an inappropriate long-term solution.

The Association has had the opportunity to organize groups of minority leaders to visit the proposed nuclear waste repository in Yucca Mountain. The detailed engineering and scientific study of the site is impressive. Based on the work in progress, we came away believing that this site will be safe, secure and suitable. America's neighborhoods have been lucky that the "dry cask" storage plan has been without a major incident. However, it is urgent that work on the Yucca Mountain, Nevada site be accelerated so that the hybrid "Plan B" strategies of the nation's nuclear power generating facilities to store fuel can be ended.

Let's work together to keep America's neighborhoods safe!

Sincerely,



Ricardo C. Byrd
Executive Director