



"Leslie.C..Davenport"@fakeaddress.net on 10/17/2001 03:06:16 PM

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 --> Comment Text :
 I support a recommendation by Secretary of Energy to President George Bush that Yucca Mountain is suitable as the Nation's high-level radioactive waste repository. Storing high level radioactive waste at one location is a much better option than continuing to store this waste above ground throughout the Nation.

In 1982, the Nuclear Waste Fund was established to receive payments from electricity consumers, with the legal commitment that DOE would begin taking spent fuel from utilities by 1/31/98. Even though three federal courts have reaffirmed that DOE has a legal obligation to accept spent fuel, DOE has not accepted any. Consumers of nuclear generated electricity have already committed \$16 billion to the Nuclear Waste Fund to pay for a repository. Nuclear utilities have also spent large sums of money to re-rack fuel storage basins, and prepare or start to store fuel above ground in large storage casks.

The science and engineering have been studied extensively at Yucca Mountain for about two decades. The unique combination of rock characteristics and the deep water table already lead many scientists to conclude that the site appears fully capable of isolating high level radioactive waste for thousands of years so that the waste will pose about the same or less risk of health effects to the public as that of unmined uranium ore. Research at Yucca Mountain has been continually reviewed by regulatory, advisory and scientific peer groups.

Earlier reports such as DOE's draft EIS and from the National Academy of Sciences have presented a strong case to develop a repository as the safest and most economical way to dispose of high level radioactive waste. Transportation casks to bring high level waste to a repository are designed and built to withstand a drop test, puncture test, fire and emersion tests. Since the mid-1960s, an outstanding safety record has been compiled with about 3000 shipments of used nuclear fuel.

I still believe the best solution for our Nation is the recycling of used nuclear fuel (e.g., pyro-processing developed by Argonne National Laboratory West) and separation of long half life transuranic isotopes for recycle from short half life isotopes for disposal at an underground repository.

No matter whether our Nation revives recycling or stays with the wasteful once through concept for nuclear fuel, a repository will be needed for the radioactive byproducts of these processes. Yucca Mountain appears to be the acceptable solution for the Nation's repository. Now, the greatest challenges appear to be social and political, of which the next step is a recommendation by Secretary of Energy to President George Bush that Yucca Mountain is suitable as the Nation's high-level radioactive waste repository.
