

October 4, 2001

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The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary of Energy
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20585

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Dear Mr. Secretary,

Your department achieved a major milestone in its mission to develop an underground disposal facility for used nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste from commercial facilities when it issued its preliminary site suitability evaluation.

During the construction and initial decade of its operation, I was involved in the environmental permitting and monitoring program for River Bend Station in St. Francisville, Louisiana. I appreciate the complexity of the engineering and scientific data and the monumental effort expended in gathering, reviewing and reporting this data.

As the culmination of nearly two decades of scientific and environmental study, this preliminary site suitability evaluation provides a sound scientific foundation for your decision to recommend Yucca Mountain as a repository site. This compilation of scientific and engineering data regarding Yucca Mountain fulfills a specific requirement of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act for your department to provide scientific information on those issues being considered prior to recommending a repository site.

The Energy Department and its teams of scientists from the national laboratories and the U.S. Geological Survey find no evidence to disqualify Yucca Mountain as a site for a permanent repository. Additionally, important oversight of these years of study was provided by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board and the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste, who continually reviewed the conduct of this research and the conclusions that it reaches.

The development of a repository is the safest and most economical way to dispose of used fuel rods from commercial nuclear power plants and radioactive waste from the nation's defense activities. The draft environmental impact statement for Yucca Mountain showed that transportation can be safely conducted and is a much better option than continuing to store used fuel at more than 70 sites around the country. The outstanding record of safety spanning nearly 3,000 shipments of used fuel since the mid-1960s strengthens this approach.

Mr. Secretary, consumers have committed \$17 billion solely for the federal government's nuclear waste management program and the program cannot be delayed further. As a consumer of electricity from Entergy's nuclear power plants, I encourage you to designate Yucca Mountain as the nation's repository for used nuclear fuel and forward your recommendation to the President for action.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Harrington
Senior Health Physics/Chemistry Specialist, and former
Supervisor, Environmental Services
River Bend Station