
Glossary

acceptable level of risk — A determination that considers both the consequences of an action and personal values in deciding whether or not to act.

affected parties — The designation as established by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act as amended that a State, Indian Tribe, or unit of local government is a potential host for a repository or MRS facility. The term also applies to an Indian Tribe that the Secretary of the Interior finds would experience substantial and adverse effects from a MRS facility or a repository. Such term may at the discretion of the Secretary include contiguous units of local government.

Benefits Agreement — A legal understanding between DOE and a State that outlined the specific conditions under which a State or Indian Tribe might host a repository or monitored retrievable storage facility.

certification — The act of assuring that something is certain.

democracy — Government exercised directly by the people or through elected representatives.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) — A formal report on the environmental impacts of a projected activity. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) mandated an in-depth study of the environmental impacts associated with any new large activity that might involve the Federal Government.

EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) — An agency of the Federal Government responsible for the protection of the environment and the enforcement of environmental legislation; formed in December 1979 under Public Law 97-604.

equitable — Characterized by fairness.

flow chart — A diagram consisting of a set of symbols and connecting lines that shows step-by-step progression through a complicated procedure or system.

global — Of or pertaining to the whole world, worldwide.

ground water — Water found underground in porous rock strata and soils, as in a spring.

joint resolution — Resolution passed by both houses of a bicameral legislature.

judgment — A considered decision or evaluation.

MRS (Monitored Retrievable Storage) facility — A temporary surface storage system that was studied by the U.S. Department of Energy as a potential part of an integrated system for disposing of spent nuclear fuel.

MRS Review Commission — A group of three experts appointed to evaluate the need for a monitored retrievable storage facility as part of the system for disposing of the Nation's high-level nuclear waste; required by the 1987 amendment to the NWPA.

NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) — An abbreviation or acronym used to describe opposition to siting a facility in one's area or neighborhood.

non-ionizing radiation — Low energy radiation such as radio and television waves.

Notice of Disapproval — A formal expression in writing to the U.S. Congress of an unfavorable response by a State or Indian Tribe following a recommendation to the President of a repository or monitored retrievable storage site within the State or Tribal land.

Nuclear Waste Fund — The fund established by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to ensure that the costs of high-level radioactive waste management and disposal are borne by the owners and generators of the waste. Utilities generating electricity at nuclear powerplants pay 1 mill (1/10 of a cent) per kilowatt-hour of electricity generated by nuclear powerplants. Costs of disposing of nuclear waste from defense activities will be paid by the Federal Government.

Nuclear Waste Negotiator — The individual whose primary responsibility was to identify and negotiate with a State or Indian Tribe willing to host a repository or a MRS facility. The Office of the Nuclear Waste Negotiator was created by the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act to identify alternative sites for potential nuclear waste management facilities. The Office was terminated in January 1993. In June 1993, President Clinton directed Secretary O'Leary to continue the work until January 1995.

Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (NWPA) — A Federal law that designates how the Nation's high-level nuclear waste is to be permanently disposed of. Amended by Congress in 1987 and 1988.

Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1987 — A Federal law that amended the NWPA. Among other provisions, it named Yucca Mountain, Nevada, as the only site to be characterized for the repository.

Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board — A panel of 11 members, with distinguished service in science or engineering, nominated by the National Academy of Sciences and appointed by the President to evaluate the technical and scientific validity of activities of DOE in site characterization or transportation of spent fuel; provided for by the 1987 amendment to the NWPA.

OCRWM (Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management) — The office created in the U.S. Department of Energy by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (NWPA) to implement provisions of the NWPA governing the permanent disposal of high-level radioactive waste and nuclear spent fuel.

probability — A number expressing the likelihood of occurrence of a specific event.

quantify — To measure or express a quantity.

relative hazard — The apparent or perceived danger of a particular activity compared to other hazards.

risk assessment — An estimate of the frequencies and consequences of undesirable events and evaluation of the risks in quantitative terms; also the study of risk.

risk management — Decision making which involves both providing safety and striving for

consensus.

risk perception — One's estimate of undesirable consequences and likelihood of occurrence of undesirable consequences associated with some activity or technology.

site characterization — Activities, collection of information, and studies (whether in the laboratory or in the field) undertaken to evaluate the suitability of a site for a geologic repository.

societal — Relating to the structure or organization of society.

technical — Of the mechanical and applied sciences; requiring specialized knowledge.

trade-off — Accepting one result in order to gain another.

Yucca Mountain, Nevada — The site designated by Congress in the amended Nuclear Waste Policy Act as the site to be characterized to determine whether it is suitable for a geologic repository.