



Robert.L.Couture@fakeaddress.net on 10/10/2001 04:45:07 PM

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 --> Comment Text :
 Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to comment on the suitability of the YUCCA MOUNTAIN PROJECT for disposal of high level radioactive waste. This issue is very important to our country as well as our current and future generations of citizens. We have the technological methods for safe, long term storage of radioactive high level waste and must now show that we have the political courage and conviction to proceed.

I believe that the Secretary of Energy should forward a positive recommendation on to the president which states that the site is qualified and should be allowed to proceed with the application of a construction license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The reasons that support this position are summarized below:

1. For about two decades, there have been in-depth scientific studies of

Yucca Mountain. The studies have covered hydrology, geology, seismology and more.

2. Throughout these studies, teams of scientists have found no evidence that would disqualify Yucca Mountain as a site for a permanent repository for high level radioactive waste.

3. This research has been continually reviewed by regulatory, advisory and scientific peer groups.

4. Earlier reports, such as those from the National Academy of Sciences and the DOE's draft environmental impact statement, have presented a strong case for the development of a repository as the safest and most economical way to dispose of used fuel rods from commercial nuclear power plants and radioactive waste from government use.

5. Storing high level radioactive waste at one location is a better option than continuing to accumulate used fuel at more than 70 sites around the country.

6. The proposed repository would have specially engineered containers for holding high level radioactive waste materials and a robust combination of engineered and natural barriers to protect the environment.

7. The transportation casks for fuel rods, designed and built to withstand rigors, have been put through exhaustive testing, withstanding even the destructive forces of a speeding locomotive. Since the mid-1960s, an outstanding safety record has been compiled with about 3,000 shipments of used fuel.

8. Legislation enacted in 1982 provided that in exchange for payments into the Nuclear Waste Fund by electricity consumers, the Department of Energy would begin taking spent fuel from utilities by January 31, 1998. That date came and went. Although three federal courts have reaffirmed that DOE has a legal obligation to accept spent fuel, it has accepted none. And, this is despite the fact that consumers of electricity generated by nuclear energy have committed \$16 billion to the Nuclear Waste Fund to pay for the repository.

9. Finally, I had the privilege of working at the Yucca Mountain site for approximately 5 months in the latter part of 2000. Any person who is concerned about the "isolation" of this site needs to take the time to go out to the site and see exactly how far removed this site is for surrounding population centers.
