

March 6, 2000

Dr. B. John Garrick, Chairman
Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR
YUCCA MOUNTAIN

Dear Dr. Garrick:

I am responding to your letter of January 20, 2000, to the Chairman, providing the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste's (hereafter the Committee's) comments on the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed high-level radioactive waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. The Committee provided comments and recommendations in three areas: 1) the bases (as presented in the DOE Viability Assessment (VA)) for the consideration of pre- and postclosure impacts in the DEIS; 2) treatment of the no-action alternative scenarios; and 3) impacts from transportation of high-level waste (HLW) and spent nuclear fuel (SNF).

The staff provided its review of the DEIS (enclosed), including comments related to the no-action alternative and transportation, to the DOE, on February 22, 2000. The no-action alternative is addressed in Comment 13, and staff's concerns related to the DEIS' treatment of transportation of HLW and SNF are in Comment 3. In the cover letter transmitting the DEIS review and in the preface to the comments, the staff also requested that the DOE consider relevant technical comments previously submitted by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on DOE's VA. Because the VA provides many of the technical bases for determinations in the DEIS, the staff requested that the DOE also consider NRC's technical comments on the VA in the development of the final environmental impact statement.

The staff appreciates the Committee's comments. If you have any questions about the staff's review of the DEIS, please contact Ms. Charlotte Abrams at (301) 415-7293.

Sincerely,
/RA/

William D. Travers
Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosure:

Ltr to I. Itkin from W. Kane, dtd 2/22/00 ML003684764, ML003684766

cc: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield
SECY

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 Commissioner Merrifield SECY

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