



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

August 18, 1992

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The Honorable John D. Dingell, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6115

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am responding to your July 24, 1992 letter requesting my comments on the June 25, 1992 Las Vegas Review-Journal article on the possibility of reducing costs of high-level waste repository program activities at Yucca Mountain. I believe that the article generally reflects the discussions that took place during the June 24, 1992 briefing by Dr. John Bartlett, Director of the Department of Energy's (DOE's) Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management. As an independent regulatory agency, the NRC is committed to ensuring the protection of public health and safety while avoiding new and eliminating existing requirements that may be either unnecessary or unnecessarily burdensome. As NRC has developed and is implementing Part 60 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations: "Disposal of Radioactive Wastes in Geologic Repositories" (10 CFR Part 60), we have continued to strive to meet these objectives and to identify ambiguities and uncertainties in these regulations that need to be clarified. DOE has not identified any regulatory requirements which have imposed an unnecessary cost burden.

During the June 24 briefing, the Commission encouraged Dr. Bartlett to bring to our attention proposals for cost cutting. Since the briefing, Dr. Bartlett has not brought to our attention any proposal for cutting costs at the Yucca Mountain project. NRC stands ready to meet and discuss any specific proposal that would allow DOE to run a more efficient and effective repository program consistent with ensuring the protection of public health and safety.

I trust that this reply responds to your concerns. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Ivan Selin

cc: Representative Norman F. Lent
Dr. John Bartlett, DOE

Originated by: MDelligatti, NMSS

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"JUNE 26, 1992, LAS VEGAS REVIEW JOURNAL ARTICLE ON POSSIBILITY OF REDUCING
COSTS OF HIGH-LEVEL WASTE REPOSITORY ACTIVITIES ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN," DATED
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