

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 10/05/00 EDO CONTROL: G20000456
DOC DT: 09/14/00
FINAL REPLY:

Senator Harry Reid

TO:

Chairman Meserve

FOR SIGNATURE OF : ** PRI ** CRC NO: 00-0602

Chairman

DESC:

ROUTING:

DEIS - Construction and Operation of an
Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation on the
Reservation of the Skull Valley Band of Goshute
Indians and the Related Transportation Facility in
Tooele County, Utah

Travers
Paperiello
Miraglia
Norry
Craig
Burns/Cyr
Lohaus, STP
Merschhoff, RIV

DATE: 09/26/00

ASSIGNED TO: CONTACT:

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Kane

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

WM-11

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2803

September 14, 2000

Honorable Richard A. Meserve
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C., 20555-0001

Dear Chairman Meserve:

As you know, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued its Draft Environmental Impact Statement entitled "Construction and Operation of an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation on the Reservation of the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians and the Related Transportation Facility in Tooele County, Utah" in June 2000.

I hope you will agree that it is absolutely inappropriate for the NRC to refer to Yucca Mountain, NV as the "permanent national repository" as you do in this Draft EIS. As you may know, site characterization studies at Yucca Mountain have not been finished; no formal recommendation as to the suitability of Yucca Mountain as a high-level nuclear waste repository has been made to the President; and no license has been issued for the operation of Yucca Mountain as such a facility.

Regardless of the cause of the errors in the Draft EIS, the mistakes reaffirm my strong conviction that the Environmental Protection Agency - not the NRC - set groundwater standards for the Yucca Mountain suitability determination. Minor mistakes in this process could endanger the lives of thousands of Nevadan families. It is imperative that federal agencies not rush to judgment on any issue involving the proposed geologic repository.

As far as I am concerned, we are a very long way from making any decision concerning the fate of high-level nuclear waste in America. Sadly, it appears that NRC has made its judgment without the benefit of sound science or proper consideration as required by law.

I look forward to your explanation of the errors in the Draft EIS and working with you and your staff on this and other important nuclear safety issues.

Sincerely,



HARRY REID
United States Senator

HR:jwh

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