

October 23, 2000

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

I am responding to your letter of September 14, 2000, concerning the apparent mis-characterization of Yucca Mountain, Nevada, as the "permanent national repository" for the nation's high-level nuclear waste in NUREG-1714: "Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Construction and Operation of an Independent Spent Fuel Installation on the Reservation of the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians and the Related Transportation Facility in Tooele County, Utah" (hereafter, DEIS). The Commission appreciates your bringing this issue to our attention.

Although in the DEIS we attempted to qualify statements concerning the current status of a potential repository at Yucca Mountain, in some cases our wording was imprecise and the intent could be misinterpreted. I want to assure you that all agencies cooperating on the development of the DEIS (the NRC, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Surface Transportation Board) are aware of the status of Yucca Mountain and that the suitability of the Yucca Mountain site for disposal of high-level waste is still being evaluated.

In the past and in numerous venues, the Commission has consistently made it clear that, while supporting the need for a geologic repository, we take no position on where that facility should be located. We continue to adhere to that view. I assure you that the wording in the Final EIS will reflect the status of the Yucca Mountain site in a manner that will not allow for misinterpretation.

If you have any further concerns, please contact me.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Richard A. Meserve