

February 13, 2001

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: Dennis K. Rathbun, Director **/RA/**
Office of Congressional Affairs

SUBJECT: SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARING ON
DOE'S NATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAMS

On February 8, 2001, Spencer Abraham, Secretary of Energy, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee concerning plans and priorities for DOE's national security programs. During the course of the hearing, Senator James M. Inhofe (R-OK) discussed the current energy crisis in our country. He compared the use of nuclear energy in France -- 75 percent of their energy is from nuclear plants -- and we, in this country are only down at the 20% level. Senator Inhofe said he hoped that Secretary Abraham and the Administration would look at coal, natural gas, nuclear, and all other possible forms of energy.

Senator Jim Bunning (D-KY) said that nuclear energy is going to be an alternative we're going to have to look at very seriously, and he asked Secretary Abraham if DOE will be dedicated to making sure that the permanent HLW storage facility gets sited properly. Secretary Abraham said that the steps that have to be taken are well-known, and he is fully prepared to make sure that DOE maintains a time table that brings us through the process. He added that the President has made it clear that these decisions will be science-based. He also stated that the NRC has a role to play with regard to licensing. Senator Bunning questioned him further about moving the DOE process forward -- and Secretary Abraham said the Department would not drag its feet and would meet their responsibilities.

The hearing transcript is available in the Office of Congressional Affairs.

cc: EDO NRR
OGC/Cyr NMSS
OGC RES
SECY OPA
CFO
OIG
ACRS/ACNW
OCAA

Contact: Linda Portner, 415-1673

