



NRC NEWS

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No. 01-126

October 23, 2001

NRC CONCURS ON DOE'S PROPOSED FINAL SITING GUIDELINES FOR YUCCA MOUNTAIN

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has concurred in the Department of Energy's draft general siting guidelines for evaluating the suitability of Yucca Mountain, Nevada, as a site for development of a possible nuclear waste repository. This concurrence is conditional on DOE's agreement to notify NRC of any changes to the draft final guidelines, including any changes to the supplemental information, and its agreement to retransmit the revised rulemaking package to the Commission, if any substantive changes are made, for a determination as to whether re-concurrence is needed.

The revised draft guidelines, which would be contained in Part 963 of DOE's regulations, focus on the criteria and methodology to be used for evaluating relevant geological and other related aspects of the Yucca Mountain site. They are based on NRC's recently revised Part 63 regulations for licensing a nuclear waste repository.

The NRC noted that DOE has addressed NRC's March 2000 comments submitted as part of the 1999-2000 public comment process on an earlier version of Part 963. DOE amended its siting guidelines to recognize NRC jurisdiction over resolution of differences between the siting guidelines and NRC's geologic disposal regulations. DOE further committed to obtain NRC concurrence on any future siting guideline revisions that relate to NRC jurisdiction.

The DOE has indicated that, using the criteria set forth in Part 963, the Secretary of Energy will make a decision on whether to recommend Yucca Mountain to the President as the repository site for highly radioactive materials. The Secretary will base this decision on the site characterization studies performed at Yucca Mountain.

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