

# CITIZEN ALERT

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June  
July 30, 1999

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Secretary  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001  
attn. Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff

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DOCKET NUMBER  
PROPOSED RULE **PR 2, 19, 20 et al.**  
(64FR8640) (68)

Dear Madam or Sir,

Citizen Alert is very concerned about a number of aspects contained in the *Proposed Rule: Disposal of High-Level Radioactive Wastes in a Proposed Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada.*

First of all, the movement of the NRC in proposing radiation exposure standards related to a Yucca Mountain repository in advance of the EPA promulgation of standards is disquieting. We see this as a dangerous precedent in usurping the authority of the EPA in its historical and legal role as the agency responsible for setting radiation exposure standards. Citizen Alert recommends that this rule making be withdrawn until the EPA has promulgated the new standards as required by law in the Energy Policy Act of 1992.

We also take strong exception to the nature of the exposure standards proposed, which are considerable less stringent than existing standards. Why should those who live in the vicinity of Yucca Mountain be allowed a higher exposure than the rest of our nation's citizens who live near a nuclear facility or anywhere for that matter. Of particular concern here is the proposition that no separate groundwater standard exist apart from a general exposure limit (Individual Protection Standard) which would allow radiation exposure levels from the groundwater at six times the Safe Drinking Standard. This is in spite of the fact that the most likely and fastest exposure pathway to the public, assuming no "unexpected" events, would be through groundwater contamination. The proposed rule-making seriously jeopardizes the health of the future generations that may be living near Yucca Mountain.

Acknowledged by card JUL - 7 1999

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Template = SECY-067

SECY-02

There appears to be no limit on the thermal energy output of the high-level waste per unit area in this proposed rule. Citizen Alert believes this would seriously risk public safety as it is not clear whether the rock strata of Yucca Mountain can contain the potential high levels of heat and radioactivity.

The proposed rule also seriously underestimates the potential danger in relation to future possible human intrusion into the repository over the next millennia that could result in a breach of radioactive materials.

Finally, Citizen Alert does not support this proposed rule as it relates to the DOE's public accountability. It is of the utmost importance that the DOE continue to be required to systematically record its decisions that significantly concern safety, how these decisions were made, and the factors influencing those decisions.

In summary, Citizen alert urges that the *Proposed Rule: Disposal of High-Level Radioactive Wastes in a Proposed Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada*, be withdrawn and await the EPA standards and re-address the thermal output criterion, potential for human intrusion, and not rescind any of the DOE's systematic recording process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hadder". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

John Hadder, Northern Nevada Coordinator