

July 3, 2002

The Honorable Dario Herrera
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners
Clark County Government Center
500 S. Grand Central Parkway
P.O. Box 551601
Las Vegas, Nevada 89155-1601

Dear Mr. Herrera:

I am responding on behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to your letter of May 23, 2002, concerning the May 21-23, 2002, public meetings held in Las Vegas, on NRC's draft Yucca Mountain Review Plan (YMRP).

At those meetings, you and many other citizens wished to discuss transportation issues that were outside the scope of the publicized agenda. Although NRC values the input of interested members of the public on all topics relating to the potential repository, the expertise of the staff members who travel to meetings in Nevada generally corresponds to the publicized agenda for the meeting. In this case, the meeting was to make public the NRC staff's review strategy for a potential repository and to welcome comments on its draft review plan. Because the YMRP will be the guiding document for the NRC staff's review of a license application for a Yucca Mountain repository, should one be submitted to the NRC, these meetings served to allow the NRC staff to receive public comments that will help shape the next revision of this important document.

Matters relating to the transportation of spent fuel to a potential repository were not the subject of the May meetings, but have been addressed in past meetings. In fact, meetings to discuss transportation issues were held in Beatty, Tonopah, and Ely, Nevada, in early April of this year. All three meetings included presentations on NRC's role and responsibilities regarding safe transportation of spent nuclear fuel. These presentations included transportation information that was provided to Clark County citizens at a meeting in Mesquite on May 24, 2001.

As the staff announced in the May meetings, it plans to conduct additional meetings in Pahrump and Las Vegas in August to discuss NRC's plans to test a transportation cask design beyond current regulatory requirements. During these August meetings the staff will focus on obtaining input on the test plan for what it calls the "Package Performance Study." Citizens who attend can provide comments and raise questions on other issues of interest concerning transportation and the NRC's role in the potential licensing of a geological repository.

You also expressed concern that the public notification process for NRC's recent meetings in Las Vegas was insufficient. The NRC staff goes to great lengths to ensure that the public is well informed about the time, place, and subject matter of meetings held in Las Vegas

and elsewhere in Nevada. In the case of the May meetings, the staff mailed a meeting notice to a list of over 80 people, the meetings were announced in the Federal Register, notice of the meeting was posted on NRC's website, a press release was issued announcing the subject, times, and locations of all three meetings, and paid advertisements were placed in the Las Vegas Review Journal and Pahrump Valley Times. Although we believe that these measures are sufficient to ensure that the vast majority of the public has the opportunity to become aware of NRC meetings, we are open to suggestions by you or other members of the public on how better to convey notice of our meetings.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Richard A. Meserve