

June 7, 2003

Mr. LeRoy Koppendrayer, Chairman  
Minnesota Public Utilities Commissioner  
Chairman, Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition  
P.O. Box 5233  
Pinehurst, NC 28374-6718

SUBJECT: LICENSING APPLICATION PROCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

Dear Mr. Koppendrayer:

I am responding to your letter dated April 29, 2003, to Chairman Diaz regarding the mission and purpose of the Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition.

I appreciate your interest in NRC's role in the potential licensing of a geologic repository for spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. As you are aware, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is responsible for the development of the repository, and for preparation and submittal of a license application to NRC to construct and later operate the repository. NRC's role as the safety regulator is to determine whether, based on the contents of DOE's license application and the agency record established during NRC's hearing process, DOE should be granted authorization to construct the repository. Further, NRC's role in the safe transportation of spent nuclear fuel to the potential repository is limited to certification of the transportation casks, assuming DOE takes custody of the spent fuel at the licensee's site. I can assure you that we take our responsibilities with the utmost seriousness and I am confident that NRC will be prepared to carry out its statutory role in this program.

I look forward to working with you in the future and appreciate your interests in these matters. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. William Ford of the Division of Waste Management, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards. Mr. Ford may be reached on 301-415-6630.

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Martin J. Virgilio, Director  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

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Minnesota Public Utilities Commissioner  
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Martin J. Virgilio, Director  
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