

January 16, 1998

Dan Swiggett, Student
Morris Community High School District #101
1000 Union Street
Morris, Illinois 60450-1297
Dear Dan,

First of all I want to express how encouraging it is to know that young people such as yourself are taking an active interest in the state of our global environment. Your concern with nuclear waste disposal is shared by many people, but it has also been an issue in the nuclear industry for many years.

As you mentioned in your letter, nuclear power plants are the leading source of power production and nuclear waste. Both government and privately operated programs have been funded to research alternative power sources such as solar and hydroelectric. At the same time, private and government programs have been developed to help solve the problem of nuclear waste disposal. One such program is the development of a repository capable of accepting 70,000 metric tons of nuclear waste. The program is the responsibility of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Additional information on the Yucca Mountain High-Level Waste Geologic Repository can be obtained by contacting DOE at 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20585 or their web page at WWW.DOE.GOV.

Dan, I encourage you to research this topic and share information with other students. To help with this process, I have enclosed *Information Digest*, which should help you understand the mission of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and our efforts to ensure that adequate safety measures are taken to protect the public and the environment. Finally, I encourage you to research the key words, "nuclear waste," via the Internet. Many of our state and local governments and power companies have web pages set up to make nuclear industry information available to the public and address questions raised by concerned citizens. The NRC also has a web page describing the functions and responsibilities of its offices. The NRC web page address is WWW.NRC.GOV.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your letter. I hope I have addressed your concern and also given you other avenues to research.

Sincerely yours,
[Original signed by:]
Michael J. Bell, Acting Chief
Performance Assessment and High-
Level Waste Integration Branch

98-15

Enclosure: As stated

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As you mentioned in your letter, nuclear power plants are the leading source of power production and nuclear waste. Both government and privately operated programs have been funded to research alternative power sources such as solar and hydroelectric. At the same time, private and government programs have been developed to help solve the problem of nuclear waste disposal. Throughout the world, scientists and engineers have developed alternative solutions for waste disposal. One such program is the development of a repository capable of accepting 70,000 metric tons of nuclear waste. The repository design will ensure the safe storage of nuclear waste for hundreds of thousands of years. The repository is scheduled for acceptance of nuclear material by the year 2010.

Dan, I encourage you to research this topic and share information with other students. To help with this process, I have enclosed *Information Digest*, which should help you understand the mission of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and our efforts to ensure that adequate safety measures are taken to protect the public and the environment. Finally, I encourage you to research the key words, "nuclear waste," via the Internet. Many of our state and local governments and power companies have web pages set up to make nuclear industry information available to the public and address questions raised by concerned citizens. The NRC also has a web page describing the functions and responsibilities of its offices. The NRC web page address is "http://www.nrc.gov."

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