



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

December 23, 1998

Ms. Shawna Younglove  
13646 Kakat Road  
Red Creek, NY 13143

Dear Ms. Younglove:

Thank you for your letter of December 3, 1998, to Chairman Jackson. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) appreciates your interest in the safe and timely disposal of radioactive waste and in the proposed repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. As you are aware, the actual development, construction, and operation of waste disposal facilities are responsibilities of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). NRC is responsible for the regulation and licensing of a repository at Yucca Mountain, in the event that DOE recommends Yucca Mountain as a suitable site for development as a repository, and the President accepts that recommendation.

Among other things, you express concern that Yucca Mountain may not provide sufficient capacity for the spent fuel produced as a result of nuclear power generation in the United States. The proposed repository is, indeed, limited, by statute (the Nuclear Waste Policy Act), to the emplacement of no more than 70,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste, until a second repository is in operation. By the end of 1998, the U.S. will have accumulated 38,500 metric tons of spent fuel from the operation of commercial nuclear power plants. According to DOE estimates, this amount will more than double if all currently operating plants complete their 40-year licensed operating period. For the time being, this spent fuel is stored at 72 power plant locations in 33 states around the country, subject to NRC licensing requirements and regulations.

DOE's preliminary design concept for the repository anticipates a maximum acceptance rate of 3,000 metric tons per year, which DOE estimates would be achieved in the year 2014, after the facility has been licensed by the NRC, and has been operational for 4 years. If additional disposal capacity is required beyond the 70,000 ton limit, Congress would have to authorize the characterization and development of a second repository, or, in the alternative, authorize the expansion of the Yucca Mountain repository, limited, of course, to that quantity that can be safely accommodated at the site, consistent with NRC regulations.

The NRC will soon publish, for public comment, proposed regulations specifically for the proposed repository at Yucca Mountain. These regulations are intended to implement forthcoming health and safety standards that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must issue for Yucca Mountain. Information on both of these initiatives can be found on websites maintained by NRC and EPA at <http://www.NRC.gov> and <http://www.epa.gov/radiation/yucca>, respectively. For further information on DOE's progress in characterizing Yucca Mountain, I would refer you to DOE's recently released Viability Assessment, available from DOE at its website, <http://www.ymp.gov>.

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S. Younglove

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Thank you for your interest in the safe management and disposal of spent fuel and high-level radioactive waste. I very much appreciate hearing your views, and suggest that you convey your thoughts and suggestions to DOE for its consideration.

Sincerely,

[Original signed by Joseph J. Holonich for:]

John T. Greeves, Director  
Division of Waste Management  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

*Handwritten initials: JH/12/98*

Ticket: EDO G19980729

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# ACTION

## EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 12/23/98

EDO CONTROL: G19980729  
DOC DT: 12/03/98  
FINAL REPLY:

Shawna Younglove  
Red Creek, New York

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TO:

Chairman Jackson

FOR SIGNATURE OF :

\*\* GRN \*\*

CRC NO: 98-1116

Paperiello, NMSS

DESC:

ROUTING:

DISPOSAL OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE -- YUCCA MOUNTAIN

Travers  
Knapp  
Miraglia  
Norry  
Blaha  
Burns  
Merschhoff, RIV

DATE: 12/11/98

ASSIGNED TO:

CONTACT:

NMSS

Paperiello

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

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PAPER NUMBER: CRC-98-1116 LOGGING DATE: Dec 8 98  
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AUTHOR: SHAWNA YOUNGLOVE  
AFFILIATION: NEW YORK  
ADDRESSEE: CHAIRMAN JACKSON  
LETTER DATE: Dec 3 98 FILE CODE: MAT. 20  
SUBJECT: DISPOSAL OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE  
ACTION: ~~Appropriate~~ D.L.  
DISTRIBUTION: CHAIRMAN, COMRS.  
SPECIAL HANDLING: NONE  
CONSTITUENT:  
NOTES:  
DATE DUE: Dec 28  
SIGNATURE: DATE SIGNED:  
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