

REC'D BY SECY

13646 Kakat Rd.
Red Creek, NY 13143
December 3, 1998

8 DEC 98 3:20

11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Ms. Jackson,

I am writing to you about the disposal of radioactive waste in our country. I am aware that a proposed site has been chosen and is in review by the Department of Energy. This site, if I am correct, is Yucca Mountain in Nevada. I do believe that a repository for spent nuclear fuel and highly radioactive waste is necessary for protection from radiation exposure, yet how much more can safely be stored away? Each year approximately 35,000, or more, tons of spent nuclear fuel is discharged from nuclear power plants. At this rate the proposed site may not be able to meet future demands for disposal.

Yucca Mt., at a glance, appears to be a suitable site for the disposal of nuclear waste. Deep ground disposal seems to be the safest way to shield the surrounding environment from radiation. Acts of nature, though, are out of our control. Threats of earthquakes, volcanoes, groundwater contamination, and human intrusion point to flaws in this proposal. Seismic activity shows earthquake risk along with the threat of volcanic activity in the area. Studies show that water may be able to reach the radioactive material causing erosion of the containers that hold nuclear waste, or even cause a massive chain reaction underground. I believe it will be very difficult to predict the stability of the conditions at Yucca Mountain. Future human intrusion is not going to be in our control, but we do help to create an environment that may cause possible risks in the future.

The disposal of radioactive waste is a federal responsibility. Under the current policy the Department of Energy is planning to begin receiving radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel at the facility at Yucca Mt. in 2010. After obtaining the correct licenses and gaining approval the DOE will begin accepting up to 40,000 metric tons per year. Currently most states are involved in regional compacts that allows only certain states access to waste disposal sites. Beginning this year the federal government is scheduled to take responsibility.

I do believe that Yucca Mt. is a, relatively speaking, short-term solution. The estimated cost for this facility is approximated at 33 billion dollars. This seems to be a reasonable cost to protect the surrounding environment and population. Until is

9812300394 981223
NMSS SUBJ
102 CF

Rec'd w/LTR DTD 9812300390 981223

absolutely certain that Yucca Mt. is an adequate site, I believe that more on site and private waste disposal facilities should be built.

Nuclear power is a great way to generate energy. The byproduct of nuclear waste is where the problem lies. Radioactive material takes up to a quarter of a million years to decay to a safe level of radiation. It is nearly impossible to predict what conditions may be like that far into the future. Until we discover a solution that deals with the issue today, I think we should start to decrease our use of nuclear power. This would be the only way to lessen the amount of radioactive waste created, and then maybe more focus could be placed on what to do with the current waste. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Sincerely,

Shauna Younglove

Shawna Younglove