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June 18, 2003

The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Mr. Secretary,

The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development's May 28 hearing in Las Vegas, Nevada, addressed the Department of Energy's management of the Yucca Mountain Repository. At that hearing, Senators Reid and Ensign joined three testifying witnesses in suggesting certain concerns pertaining to the Yucca Site's operation. Chief among the issues raised at the hearing were the Department's alleged silencing of employees wishing to speak-out on quality assurance matters and the alleged discounting of credible health and safety questions in the interest of maintaining project schedule.

Because the Subcommittee has a great interest in the consolidation and permanent disposition of waste currently located at approximately 131 sites in 39 states around the country, I am writing to request that the Department respond specifically and in writing to the issues raised at the hearing. Such a response should address the particular concerns noted in the above paragraph, as well as those similar to them appearing in the hearing record. The responding statement should also be prepared with the knowledge that it will be included in the complete hearing record.

Sincerely,

Pete V. Domenici, Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development