

JAN 09 1989

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Mr. Sam Dugan
1480 Haines Road, NW
Orwell, Ohio 44076

Dear Mr. Dugan:

I am responding to your letter of December 12, 1988 regarding measures being taken to solve the problem of disposal of high-level nuclear wastes and spent nuclear nuclear fuel.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is the lead agency responsible for development of a repository for disposal of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, and as such would be the primary source of information on the national high-level nuclear waste program. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is responsible for licensing and regulating certain radioactive materials, including high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel from commercial nuclear power reactors.

On June 28, 1986, DOE recommended that three sites undergo site characterization to determine which should undergo development as a repository for high-level waste and spent fuel. With the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1987 (NWPAA), Congress ordered DOE to phase out site characterization activities at candidate sites for a high-level waste repository other than the Yucca Mountain, Nevada site. Congress also authorized DOE to site, construct, and operate a monitored retrievable storage (MRS) facility for storage of spent nuclear fuel, subject to certain conditions, prior to disposal in a repository.

Under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, DOE is required to prepare a comprehensive report, known as the Mission Plan, to provide a sufficient informational basis for informed decisions in carrying out the repository program and the research, development, and demonstration programs under the Act. DOE first published the Mission Plan in 1985. In June 1988, the DOE issued the "Draft 1988 Mission Plan Amendment" (Enclosure 1) to inform Congress of DOE's plans for implementing the provisions of the NWPAA. The NRC provided comments on the Draft Amendment to DOE on September 16, 1988 (Enclosure 2). The Draft Amendment schedule calls for operation of a repository in 2003.

I hope that this information on the current status of the national program to dispose of high-level waste and spent fuel has been responsive to your request. Concerning the management of high-level waste and spent fuel in

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other countries, there are similar repository development activities going on in other countries but we know of no document available now which describes these activities. If you wish to inquire further about these activities I would recommend that you address your inquiry to the following agencies:

International Atomic Energy Agency
Wagramerstrasse 5
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited
Public Affairs Department
Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment
Pinawa, Manitoba ROE 1L0
(204) 753-2311

Sincerely,

Original Signed by
Robert E. Browning

Robert E. Browning, Director
Division of High-Level Waste Management

Enclosures:
As stated

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other countries, I would recommend that you address your inquiry to the following individual:

Dr. Jozsef Hirling
International Atomic Energy Agency
Wagramerstrasse 5
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

Sincerely,

Hugh L. Thompson, Jr., Director
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Enclosures: As stated

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