



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

October 18, 2001

COMMISSIONER

The Honorable Jim Gibbons
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

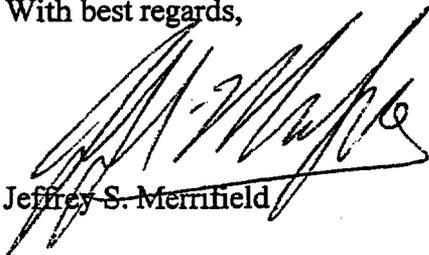
Dear Congressman Gibbons:

On September 25-27, 2001, I traveled to Las Vegas to participate in a meeting with representatives from more than 12 Native American Tribes, who have concerns about the possibility of a repository for nuclear reactor spent fuel at Yucca Mountain. The meeting, which was hosted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), was intended to understand first hand the concerns of Tribal Nations and to outline the NRC's role in spent fuel disposal issues. During my visit I also took this opportunity to meet with several State, County and local government officials and a representative of a public citizen organization to gain a better understanding of their concerns.

My first meeting was with several Nye County Commissioners who accompanied me on a tour of the town of Pahrump as well as a number of other sites in the Amargosa Valley. My tour included visits to a large dairy farm and the County's Independent Scientific Investigations' Program area where the County gathers data for independent analysis regarding the characterization of Yucca Mountain. I later traveled to the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe Reservation where I met with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Tribe. This was followed by a series of meetings with State officials, Clark County officials, the Mayors of Mesquite and Caliente; Robert Loux, the Executive Director of the Nevada Nuclear Waste Task Force; and members of the public. I then participated in the meetings with the Tribes. Approximately 40 members of 12 Native American Tribes were present at the NRC-hosted events.

I found these meetings to be informative and insightful. At your convenience, I would be pleased to share with you my personal impressions and insights that I gained from these various meetings. Please feel free to contact me directly, or have your staff contact my Chief of Staff, Lynne Stauss at (301) 415-1850.

With best regards,


Jeffrey S. Merrifield

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