



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

WM DOCKET CONTROL
CENTER

'86 OCT 28 A10:13

Reply to:
1050 East Flamingo Rd.
Suite 319
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119
Tel: (702) 388-6125
FTS: 598-6125

TO: Mr. Robert E. Browning, Director
FROM: Paul T. Prestholt, Sr. On-Site Licensing Representative
DATE: October 24, 1986
SUBJECT: Newspaper Articles

Please find enclosed more information that appeared in
our local newspaper that is of interest.

PTP:nan

WM Record File

102

WM Project

Docket No.

PDR

LPDR

Distribution:

PEB MJB

JOB

(Return to WM, 623-SS)

Linehan
Stablein

Full

21

8905240421 861024

PDR WASTE

WM-11

PDR

1183

Volatile nuke waste dump plans curbed

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The 99th Congress curbed the Energy Department's politically volatile nuclear waste dump program and postponed action on a controversial nuclear accident insurance bill.

With the nuclear accident at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union looming in the background, Congress also failed to act on sweeping changes in nuclear plant design, licensing and regulation of the U.S. nuclear industry. These issues are certain to arise again next year.

Falling projections of nuclear waste generation led the Department of Energy to indefinitely abandon its search for a dump site in the East or Midwest.

But that announcement last May exploded a fragile political compromise in which the first shipments of radioactive waste were to be buried in the West, with a second site set up in the eastern half of the country by a certain time.

Energy Department officials released documents indicating they considered the intense political pressure in postponing the second site, but said then, and continue to say, that they based the decision on technical and financial considerations.

Incensed Western lawmakers, calling the move blatantly political, froze money for the program at current levels and pushed through a ban on exploratory shaft drilling this fiscal year at the three prospective sites in Washington, Nevada and Texas.

The department had planned to drill at the Hanford, Wash., site and possibly at the Nevada test site during the period, said department spokeswoman Ginger King. She said other work would continue, including waste package design and studies of transportation and other needs.

The program will receive \$499 million for the fiscal year ending next Sept. 30, compared to a requested \$769 million, with \$79 million of the \$499 million contingent on better consultation and cooperation with states and Indian tribes.

But since no one wants a high-level nuclear waste dump, some doubt that a compromise can be reached.

"Trust is an absolutely essential ingredient and probably one that will never be obtained," program director Ben Rusche told a journalism conference this month.

But he said he expects the intensity of the resentment to subside.

County, state working on nuke shipment plan

By MARY MANNING
SUN Staff Writer

Clark County and Nevada officials are working together to map out alternate routes for high-level nuclear wastes, in case Yucca Mountain is chosen as the nation's radioactive graveyard, a county planner has said.

Dennis Bechtel of the Clark County Comprehensive Planning Department said the county has hired Mountain West of Phoenix with state funds to study all social and economic impacts of nuclear waste in Southern Nevada, including transportation.

State and local officials, from Gov. Richard Bryan down, are fighting Department of Energy plans to bury 70,000 tons or more of nuclear wastes at Yucca Mountain, about 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas. Two other sites, one in Washington and another in Texas are also under consideration.

The Department of Energy is "floundering around" on socioeconomic impacts such as tourism, transportation and risk assessment, Bechtel told the county advisory group, Environmental Policy Quality Review Board, at its meeting Tuesday.

DOE's environmental assessment, released May 28, virtually ignores such areas that are vital to Southern Nevada's tourism and

gaming economy, Bechtel said.

"Image is important to Las Vegas," County Commissioner Manuel Cortez, chairman of EQPRB, said.

City Councilman Ron Lurie, an EQPRB member, said he serves on a liaison committee working directly with the state to coordinate local studies. He said he was afraid the studies might duplicate some DOE information, "but DOE won't share. With DOE, it's a one-way street."

Under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, DOE must cooperate and consult with state governments and Indian tribes, Bechtel said.

And, added Jim Ley from county Comprehensive Planning, local governments can ask for more than the basics.

"The routes transport nuclear wastes right through our community," Ley said. "You can ask for such things as roads."

Based on DOE's environmental assessment, every load of nuclear waste, whether on trucks or trains, will come through Las Vegas.

Reagan asked to intervene in selection of nuke dump site

Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Gov. Booth Gardner called Wednesday on President Reagan to intervene in the process for choosing the nation's first high-level nuclear waste repository.

The Washington governor said he decided to ask for Reagan's help because of what he charged has been the U.S. Department of Energy's "deliberate and consistent attempt to put politics above safety."

"I must appeal to your sense of fairness and equity and urge you to intervene in this matter," Gardner wrote in his letter to the president.

"I know that as president of the United States you realize your obligation to protect the citizens of the nation equally without prejudice. There is a great injustice being done to the people of Washington, and I ask for your help immediately."

Gardner said he wrote the letter because of recent revelations that the DOE had stricken from a methodology report findings stating that the Hanford nuclear reservation was the least safe location for a repository.

Also being considered as the site for a national repository are Yucca Mountain in Nevada and Deaf Smith County, Texas.

"The consistency of USDOE's action — covering up important scien-

tific evidence for the sake of political expediency — is one reason I wrote the letter," Gardner said.

"The other reason is that I think that the president should know what one of his agencies is involved in — what kind of sham USDOE is trying to foist on us."

Gardner said when he learned material had been deleted from the report he attempted to call Energy Secretary John Herrington on two different occasions.

The governor said he was told by a secretary that Herrington had received his messages.

"As of this writing," Gardner told the president, "my phone calls to Secretary John Herrington at USDOE have not been returned — his unwillingness to answer my phone calls leads me to believe his office truly does have something to hide."

"I have been patient," Gardner wrote. "Rather than take the approach of other governors, I have determined to allow scientific and independent reviews decide the fate of the process. However, the rational approach is not working and my patience is wearing thin."

In Pasco where he was campaigning for Democratic legislative candidates, Gardner was asked if his letter to Reagan meant that there would be

no more Mr. Nice Guy.

Responded Gardner: "You get tired of having your instep stepped on. You get to a certain point at which being kicked under the table hurts. You either move or fight back."

He pointed out that Referendum 40, which will be on the November ballot, will give the people the chance to say whether they want state officials to use all legal means to suspend the preliminary site selection process under which Hanford was chosen as one of three candidate sites.

"We have the referendum, now we're going to try to get the president's attention," Gardner said.

He also blasted the Department of Energy, saying "their credibility to now sub-zero."

"All you have to do is track what has been occurring, and if there is any accuracy to all the reports in the news media, and we have reason to believe there is, then you have to be concerned over what I have been saying all along, which is the process has turned political and bureaucratic."

"The whole purpose of our effort is to stick with the issues in the Nuclear Waste Policy act, which is regional equity, and scientifically and technically driven analysis. That's all we're asking for," the governor said.