



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

April 6, 1992

Mr. Joseph J. Holonich, Director
Repository Licensing and Quality
Assurance Project Directorate
Division of Nuclear Material
Safety and Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Holonich:

Enclosed are five additional copies of the Early Site Suitability
Evaluation report that Ms. Charlotte Abrams recently requested.
Please forward these copies to her.

Sincerely,

John P. Roberts
Acting Associate Director for
Systems and Compliance
Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management

Enclosure:
Early Site Suitability Evaluation Report

~~Attended~~ *inclosure*
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Washington, DC 20585

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Dear Reader:

The Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM) has responsibility to determine whether or not the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada is a suitable location for a repository for disposal of spent reactor fuel and high-level waste. Fulfillment of this responsibility will involve acquisition of data concerning the site's physical characteristics and interpretation of the data to make findings concerning suitability of the site for waste disposal.

Data acquisition at the site has been underway since the 1970's. In 1985, available data were used to prepare an Environmental Assessment for the site, and in 1988 the then-current data base was used to prepare the Site Characterization Plan.

In 1990, to implement goals established by the Secretary in 1989, I directed that OCRWM adopt an objective to evaluate, as soon as possible, whether or not the Yucca Mountain site is suitable for disposal, and a strategy to focus data acquisition and utilization on meeting this objective. I also directed, as part of this strategy, that a current baseline site evaluation be made. This baseline would be used to focus and prioritize future data acquisition activities and to provide a foundation for resolution of technical issues concerned with site evaluation.

This letter transmits, for your review and comment, the baseline site evaluation, "Report of Early Site Suitability Evaluation of the Potential Repository Site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada." The Report is accompanied by a document which compiles the comments of the members of an independent peer review panel which assessed the baseline Report.

These documents will be used by the Department as part of the basis for future plans and actions for evaluating the Yucca Mountain site. To help assure a sound basis for our future plans and activities, I invite your comments on these documents and the site evaluation process.

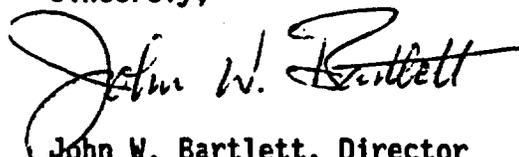
Your comments should be received by June 15, 1992, in order to be addressed in the public comment/response record. Please send your comments to:

Mr. Carl P. Gertz, Manager
U.S. DOE, Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Project Office
101 Convention Center Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89109

During the public comment period I will host the first Director's Forum, an initiative announced in the Draft Mission Plan Amendment published in September 1991. This Forum will provide an opportunity for representatives of affected governments, interested parties, and the public to discuss with Department Of Energy representatives our policy, strategy, and plans for site evaluation. The location and time of the Forum will be announced soon and a formal notice will be placed in the Federal Register. At present, we expect the Forum to be held early in May in Chicago.

I greatly appreciate your interest and effort concerning Yucca Mountain site evaluation. Comprehensive pre-decisional inputs contribute greatly to the soundness of our program activities, and I thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John W. Bartlett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

John W. Bartlett, Director
Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management