
Nuclear Waste Policy Act
(Section 113)



Site Characterization Plan

***Yucca Mountain Site, Nevada Research
and Development Area, Nevada***

Volume IV, Part B

Chapter 8, Sections 8.0 through 8.3.14

December 1988

U. S. Department of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management

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FOREWORD

This site characterization plan (SCP) has been developed for the candidate repository site at Yucca Mountain in the State of Nevada. This site was one of three sites recommended by the Secretary of Energy and approved by the President, on May 27, 1986, for characterization under the provisions of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA) of 1982. This site was subsequently designated by the Congress in the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act (NWPAA) of 1987 as the only candidate site to be characterized at this time. This SCP has been developed to meet the requirements of Section 113(b)(1)(A)-(C) of the NWPA. It is being submitted to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and to the Governor and Legislature of the State of Nevada for review and comment, in accordance with Section 113(b)(1) of the NWPA as amended. The SCP is also being submitted to Clark, Lincoln, and Nye counties, which have been designated as affected units of local government, and is available to the public.

In accordance with the requirements of the NWPA and the regulations promulgated by the NRC in Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 60 (10 CFR Part 60), the SCP includes a description of the Yucca Mountain site (Chapters 1-5), a conceptual design for the repository (Chapter 6), a description of the packaging to be used for the waste to be emplaced in the repository (Chapter 7), and a description of the planned site characterization activities (Chapter 8). A consultation draft of the SCP (SCP/CD) was made available on January 8, 1988, in order to familiarize the NRC, the State of Nevada, and other interested parties with the contents of the document, and to promote interactions that would enhance the quality of the SCP that is now being issued. Comments received on the SCP/CD by the end of June 1988 have been considered in the preparation of this SCP. In addition, DOE, NRC, and State representatives participated in a number of technical meetings at which the major NRC concerns were discussed. The comments and the results of the meetings were reviewed and, where appropriate, an effort has been made to address these concerns in the SCP. Comments received subsequent to June 1988 and resulting in changes to site characterization will be addressed in semiannual progress reports.

The schedules and milestones presented in Sections 8.3 and 8.5 of the SCP were developed to be consistent with the June 1988 draft Amendment to the DOE's Mission Plan for the Civilian Radioactive Waste Management Program. The five month delay in the scheduled start of exploratory shaft construction that was announced recently is not reflected in these schedules. The DOE is currently evaluating the overall program schedule to determine what impacts this delay may have on the schedule for other program activities and milestones. Revisions to the overall program schedule and to the major program milestones will be addressed in the 1988 Mission Plan Amendment expected to be issued in the first quarter of calendar year 1989. Revisions to the schedules and milestones for site characterization activities will be provided in semiannual progress reports.

Consistent with the requirements of the NWPA, before proceeding to sink the exploratory shafts, the DOE will hold public hearings in the vicinity of the Yucca Mountain site to inform the residents of the plan and to receive their comments. These hearing are currently scheduled to be held during a

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90-day comment period. In accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 60, the DOE will also defer sinking the exploratory shafts until there has been an opportunity to consider the NRC's comments on this activity. On the current schedule, the DOE will begin exploratory shaft construction in November 1989. Comments received on the SCP during the public comment period and subsequently from the NRC will be considered by the DOE in evaluating and revising its site characterization plans. Changes in the plans for site characterization activities will be noted in semiannual reports.

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