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WM Record File

WM Project 10, 11, 16

Docket No. _____

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WM DOCKET CONTROL CENTER

12/19/84

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NRC-M&M-MNBB

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To Secy HST
+ John Davis - SS
FR. CIA
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UN

NUCLEAR WASTES (TOPS N017)

URGENT

BY GOTT YANCEY

WASHINGTON (AP) -- THE GOVERNMENT TODAY PICKED THREE SITES IN TEXAS, NEVADA AND WASHINGTON AS STANDING THE GREATEST CHANCE OF GETTING A BACKYARD NEIGHBOR VIRTUALLY NO ONE WANTS -- A PERMANENT GRAVESITE FOR HIGHLY RADIOACTIVE NUCLEAR WASTES, A CONGRESSIONAL SOURCE SAID.

THE SOURCE, WHO DEMANDED ANONYMITY, SAID ENERGY SECRETARY DONALD DEL TOLD MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THIS MORNING THE THREE PRIORITY SITES ARE:

--DEAF SMITH COUNTY ABOUT 30 MILES WEST OF AMARILLO IN THE TEXAS PANHANDLE.

--THE GOVERNMENT'S HANFORD NUCLEAR RESERVATION NEAR RICHLAND, WASH.

--YUCCA MOUNTAIN ON THE WESTERN EDGE OF NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE AND THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS TEST SITE IN NEVADA NEAR THE CALIFORNIA BORDER.

THE NEXT TWO ALTERNATIVE SITES, ACCORDING TO SEVERAL CONGRESSIONAL SOURCES, ARE DAVIS CANYON JUST OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARY OF CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK IN SOUTHEASTERN UTAH AND RICHTON DOME NEAR THE TOWN OF RICHTON, MISS.

FOLLOWING YEARS OF PRELIMINARY STUDIES, THE ENERGY DEPARTMENT WAS SCHEDULED TO FORMALLY ANNOUNCE ITS FIRST FORMAL RANKINGS OF NINE SITES

SIX STATES AT AN AFTERNOON NEWS CONFERENCE.

BUT HODEL AND OTHER OFFICIALS WERE ON THE PHONES EARLY THIS MORNING CALLING GOVERNORS AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS FROM THE AFFECTED STATES TO GIVE THEM ADVANCE NOTICE.

ONE OF THOSE CALLED, REP. TRENT LOTT, R-MISS., SAID HODEL TOLD HIM RICHTON DOME WAS NOT IN THE LIST OF TOP THREE SITES BUT WAS ON THE TOP FIVE LIST FOR THE FACILITY, WHERE SOME 70,000 METRIC TONS OF ATOMIC WASTES ARE TO BE BURIED.

ALTHOUGH A FINAL SITE WILL NOT BE CHOSEN UNTIL 1990, THE 15,000 PAGES OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS INDICATE WHICH LOCALITIES ARE PREFERRED BY FEDERAL OFFICIALS.

"THEY CLEARLY SHOW WHICH THREE WE CONSIDER TO BE THE TOP-RANKED, PLUS TWO ADDITIONAL ONES THAT WE VIEW AS THE TOP ALTERNATIVES," GINGER KING, AN ENERGY DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN, SAID THIS WEEK.

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