

JAN 10 1985

Enclosure 1

DOENEWS:

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EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE UNTIL
2:00 P.M. EST, DECEMBER 19, 1984

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ANNOUNCES THREE PROPOSED SITES FOR POTENTIAL DISPOSAL OF HIGH-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE

The U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) will release tomorrow for public review and comment, draft Environmental Assessments relating to potential nuclear waste disposal sites. The documents propose, in alphabetical order, sites in Nevada, Texas and Washington State for detailed investigation ("site characterization") for the Nation's first permanent geologic repository for high-level radioactive waste.

Three sites are proposed for site characterization. They are, in alphabetical order by state: Yucca Mountain in Nevada; Deaf Smith in Texas; and Hanford in Washington. DOE is proposing to recommend these three sites for site characterization. Site characterization includes construction of exploratory shafts to depths of a proposed repository -- about 1000 to 4000 feet below ground -- so that hands-on scientific data collection and analysis can be done to determine if those sites meet the criteria for construction of a repository.

These preliminary determinations are part of the activities required by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 signed into law on January 7, 1983. Among the major activities required by the Act are for DOE to:

- o Identify potentially acceptable sites - nine were identified in February 1983 for the first repository.

(MORE)

o Nominate at least five of those sites as suitable for site characterization. Environmental Assessments must accompany the nominations.

o Recommend three of the nominated sites for site characterization.

DOE's proposal to recommend the above sites for site characterization is preliminary and subject to public review and comment. The suitability of sites for site characterization has been evaluated and is reported in draft Environmental Assessments being issued on nine sites identified in February 1983 as potentially acceptable sites for a mined geologic repository for spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste.

From among the nine potentially acceptable sites, five sites are proposed for nomination as suitable for site characterization. They include the above three sites, Richton Dome in Mississippi and Davis Canyon in Utah. Other sites considered in the draft assessments are: Vacherie Dome in Louisiana, Cypress Creek Dome in Mississippi, Swisher County in Texas, and Lavender Canyon in Utah. These four sites are not proposed for nomination.

All nine draft Environmental Assessments will be available beginning tomorrow for a 90-day public comment period. During the 90-day comment period, public information briefings and public hearings on the draft Environmental Assessments will be scheduled in each of the six States in which the nine potential sites are located. After consideration of comments and consultation with affected States and Indian tribes, DOE will prepare final Environmental Assessments.

Following issuance of final Environmental Assessments, the Secretary of Energy will formally nominate at least five sites as suitable for site characterization and recommend three of the nominated sites to the President for site characterization as candidate sites for the first repository. Site characterization will occur only at the sites recommended to, and approved by, the President.

DOE's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management is issuing draft Environmental Assessments on each of the nine potentially acceptable sites under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982. This Act calls for DOE to site, design, construct and operate deep, geologic repositories for spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste from the Nation's nuclear power plants. The Act lays out a detailed process and timetable leading to operation of the first such repository beginning in 1998.

After the four-to-five years of site characterization is completed, DOE will again evaluate each site and recommend one site to the President for the first repository. The President may then recommend the site to Congress.

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When the President recommends the site to Congress, which is estimated to be 1990, the host State may issue a notice of disapproval that can be overridden only by a resolution of both Houses of the U.S. Congress. If the notice of disapproval is not overridden, the President must submit another repository site recommendation to Congress within 12 months. If no notice of disapproval is submitted, or if the notice of disapproval is overridden, then, as prescribed by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, the site designation is effective, and DOE will proceed to file an application with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to obtain a construction authorization for a repository at that site.

Each of the draft Environmental Assessments being issued by DOE is approximately 1,000 pages long and assesses each site against general siting guidelines (General Guidelines for the Recommendation of Sites for Nuclear Waste Repositories) published in the Federal Register on December 6, 1984. The guidelines establish performance objectives for a geologic repository system, define the basic technical requirements that candidate sites must meet and specify how DOE will implement its site-selection process. After site characterization is completed, DOE will again evaluate each site in terms of the guidelines.

Requests for copies of draft Environmental Assessments may be made by writing to: U.S. Department of Energy, Attention: EA, 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20585. Requests for copies may also be made by telephone: Nationwide Toll-Free, 800/858-1600; Maryland (outside Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area), 800/638-2054; Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Area, 530-7700. Copies of all nine draft Environmental Assessments are also available for public inspection at DOE Information Offices and DOE Public Reading Rooms listed in the attachment to this Press Release.

Interested parties are invited to provide written comments on the draft Environmental Assessments to: Comments -- EA, U.S. Department of Energy, ATTN: Comments -- EA, 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20585. All comments should be received by DOE by March 20, 1985, to ensure consideration in preparing the final Environmental Assessments. The specific site being addressed in each comment should be clearly indicated.

- DOE -

R-84-150

PRELIMINARY SELECTION OF CANDIDATE NUCLEAR WASTE REPOSITORY SITES FOR FIELD CHARACTERIZATION

DECEMBER 1984

OFFICE OF CIVILIAN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT



SUMMARY

- **NEED FOR GEOLOGIC DISPOSAL OF NUCLEAR WASTE**
- **NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT OF 1982 ESTABLISHES PROCESS AND SCHEDULE**
- **SITING GUIDELINES PUBLISHED DECEMBER 1984**
- **DRAFT EAs NOW AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW**
- **DRAFT EAs CONTAIN PRELIMINARY SITING DECISIONS:**
 - **FIVE SITES PROPOSED FOR NOMINATION AS SUITABLE FOR CHARACTERIZATION**
 - **THREE SITES PREFERRED FOR CHARACTERIZATION**
- **PRELIMINARY DECISIONS BASED ON EVALUATIONS IN EA**
- **DOE ELECTED TO PUBLISH NINE DRAFT EAs FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

NEED FOR GEOLOGIC DISPOSAL OF NUCLEAR WASTE

- **NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS SUPPLY 13% OF NATION'S ELECTRICITY**
 - **GENERATE SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL**
 - **SAFE DISPOSAL REQUIRED TO PROTECT MAN & ENVIRONMENT**
 - **OVER 10,000 TONNES OF SPENT FUEL NOW IN TEMPORARY STORAGE (40,000 TONNES BY YEAR 2000)**
- **SAFE PERMANENT DISPOSAL OF WASTE TECHNICALLY & ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE**
 - **SHOWN IN 30 YEARS OF STUDIES**
- **KNOWING THIS, CONGRESS PASSED NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT OF 1982**
 - **ACT DIRECTS DOE TO SELECT, LICENSE, CONSTRUCT, OPERATE**

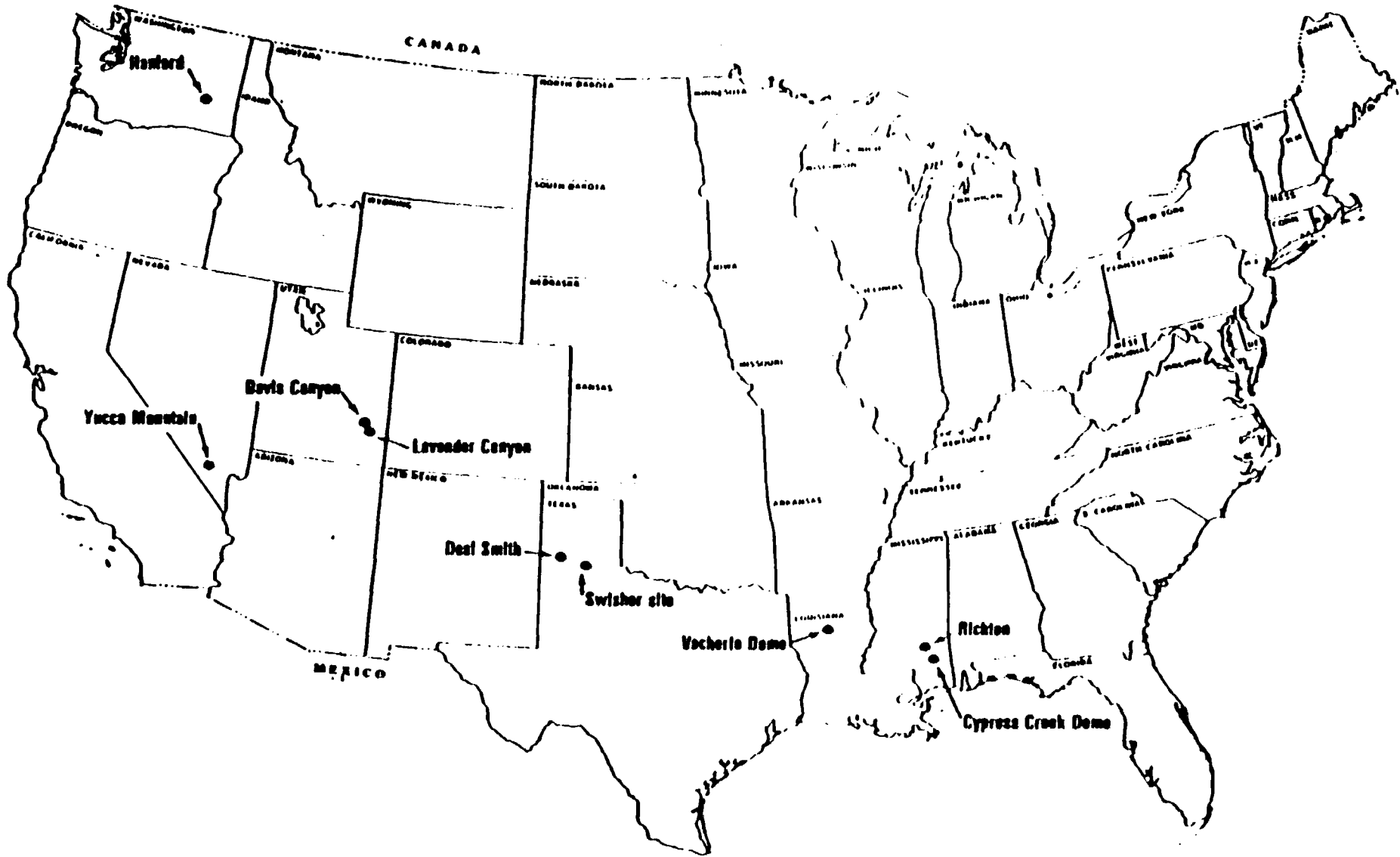
DRAFT EAs

- **PURPOSE**

- **PROVIDE BASIS FOR PROPOSED SITE NOMINATION AND RECOMMENDATION DECISIONS**
- **ASSESS IMPACTS OF SITE CHARACTERIZATION AND REPOSITORY DEVELOPMENT**
- **IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVES THAT MAY BE UNDERTAKEN TO AVOID SUCH IMPACTS**

- **CONTENT REQUIRED BY SECTION 112(b)**

- **DESCRIPTION OF THE DECISION PROCESS**
- **DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS**
- **EVALUATION OF EFFECTS OF SITE CHARACTERIZATION ACTIVITIES**
- **ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL EFFECTS OF REPOSITORY DEVELOPMENT**
- **SITING GUIDELINES EVALUATION OF SUITABILITY FOR CHARACTERIZATION AND REPOSITORY DEVELOPMENT**
- **COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF NOMINATED SITES**



Potentially acceptable sites for the first repository.

PROPOSED NOMINATIONS

- **MISSISSIPPI — RICHTON DOME (PERRY COUNTY)**
- **NEVADA — YUCCA MOUNTAIN (NYE COUNTY)**
- **TEXAS — DEAF SMITH COUNTY**
- **UTAH — DAVIS CANYON (SAN JUAN COUNTY)**
- **WASHINGTON — DOE HANFORD SITE (BENTON & FRANKLIN COUNTIES)**

LOCATIONS OF PRELIMINARY CANDIDATE SITES

- **NEVADA — YUCCA MOUNTAIN (NYE COUNTY)**
- **TEXAS — DEAF SMITH COUNTY**
- **WASHINGTON — DOE HANFORD SITE**

BASIS FOR SITE SELECTIONS

NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT REQUIREMENTS

- **IDENTIFY POTENTIALLY ACCEPTABLE SITES (PASs) — 2/83**
- **ISSUE GENERAL SITING GUIDELINES — 12/84**
- **PUBLISH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS**
- **NOMINATE AT LEAST 5 PASs AS SUITABLE UNDER GUIDELINES**
- **RECOMMEND 3 FOR SITE CHARACTERIZATION**
- **RECOMMEND 1 FOR FIRST REPOSITORY**

GENERAL SITING GUIDELINES (10 CFR PART 960)

- **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**
 - **DETAIL 9-5-3-1 PROCESS**
 - **APPLICATION OF OTHER GUIDELINES**
- **POSTCLOSURE GUIDELINES (HIGHER WEIGHT)**
 - **LONG-TERM WASTE ISOLATION**
- **PRECLOSURE GUIDELINES (LOWER WEIGHT)**
 - **IMPACT OF REPOSITORY CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

- **MUST ACCOMPANY EACH NOMINATION**
- **9 DRAFT EAs FOR PUBLIC COMMENT (DRAFT NOT REQUIRED BY ACT)**
- **REFLECT SEC. 112 CONTENT REQUIREMENTS**
- **COMPLETE BASIS FOR PRELIMINARY NOMINATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **BASED ON COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF FIVE PROPOSED NOMINEES**
 - **RANKED UNDER EACH TECHNICAL GUIDELINE**
 - **PREFERRED ORDER ANALYSIS OF RANKINGS**

- **YUCCA, DEAF SMITH & HANFORD SITES PREFERRED**
 - **MOST ADVANTAGEOUS COMBINATION OF FACTORS**
 - **NO ORDER OF PREFERENCE AMONG THREE**

- **RIGHTON & DAVIS CANYON SITES LESS ADVANTAGEOUS**
 - **SUITABLE FOR CHARACTERIZATION, BUT NOT PREFERRED**

- **RESULTS PRELIMINARY**

SCHEDULE FOR FINAL NOMINATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

- **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD CLOSSES — 3/20/85**
- **CONSULT WITH STATES/AFFECTED TRIBES — SPRING 85**
- **PUBLISH FINAL EAs — SUMMER 85**
- **FORMAL NOMINATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO PRESIDENT —
SUMMER 85**
- **PRESIDENT APPROVES 3 SITES FOR CHARACTERIZATION —
SUMMER/FALL 85**

SCHEDULE FOR FIRST REPOSITORY SITING, CONSTRUCTION, AND OPERATION

- **EXPLORATORY SHAFT CONSTRUCTION INITIATED**
 - **HANFORD SITE (SPRING 1986)**
 - **YUCCA MOUNTAIN SITE (SUMMER 1986)**
 - **DEAF SMITH SITE (SPRING 1987)**
- **ISSUE DRAFT EIS ON SITE SELECTION — 1990**
- **PRESIDENT RECOMMENDS SITE — 1991**
- **LICENSING COMPLETED — 1993/94**
- **COMPLETE PHASE I CONSTRUCTION — 1997**
- **BEGIN PHASE I OPERATION — 1998**
- **COMPLETE PHASE II CONSTRUCTION — 2000**

WHAT HAPPENS TO SITES NOT CHOSEN FOR FIRST REPOSITORY?

- **REMAINING CHARACTERIZED AND SUITABLE SITES: ELIGIBLE FOR SECOND REPOSITORY**
- **REMAINING NOMINATED BUT NOT RECOMMENDED SITES: INELIGIBLE FOR SECOND REPOSITORY**
- **SITES NOT NOMINATED: ELIGIBLE FOR SECOND REPOSITORY**

PUBLIC BRIEFINGS AND HEARINGS ON DRAFT EAs

- **90-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD BEGINNING 12/20/84**
- **JANUARY BRIEFINGS FOR STATES AND PUBLIC — QUESTION & ANSWER SESSIONS**
- **FEBRUARY/MARCH PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR COMMENTS — FORMAL SESSIONS FOR COMMENT RECORD**

DECEMBER 19-20 EVENTS

12/19

- **BEGINNING AT 9:30 — DOE TELEPHONE CALLS TO CONGRESS AND STATES**
- **11:00 A.M. — CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING**
- **2:00 P. M. — SECRETARY'S PRESS CONFERENCE**
- **PERSONAL DELIVERY OF DRAFT EAs TO STATES/AFFECTED TRIBES**

12/20

- **DRAFT EAs RELEASED**
- **START PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**