



Department of Energy

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1. Davis
2. Mausshardt
cc WM

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SEP 3 1985

WM Record File

103

WM Project

R11116

Docket No.

PDR

LPDR (6, U.S.)

Mr. John Davis
Director
Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
7915 Eastern Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Distribution:

PEB MTB
JOB HSM
(Return to WM, 623-SS)

Linahan MKK
Johnson JTG
df

Dear Mr. Davis:

For your information, enclosed is a copy of a letter I have sent to the Chairman of the National Academy of Sciences' Board on Radioactive Waste Management. The letter requests the Board's review of the methodology which we will use in the Environmental Assessments to support our decision regarding preferred order of sites for characterization. As you are aware, we received many comments on the draft Environmental Assessments, including comments on the ranking methodologies. We are carefully reviewing these comments and believe that it is appropriate and useful to request the Board's review of this important management tool.

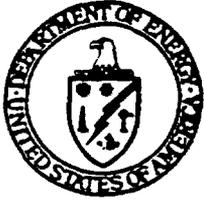
Sincerely,

Ben C. Rusche
Ben C. Rusche, Director
Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management

Enclosure

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PDR WASTE PDR
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Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

AUG 29 1985

Dr. Frank Parker
Vanderbilt University
P.O. Box 1596, Station B
Nashville, Tennessee 37235

Dear Dr. Parker:

This is in reference to your telephone conversation with Tom Isaacs of my office on August 5, 1985, regarding the possibility of the National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) Board on Radioactive Waste Management conducting an independent review of the methodology to be used to evaluate sites for consideration as candidate sites for characterization for the first geologic radioactive waste repository. We would like to request the Board's review consistent with the scope and schedule described below.

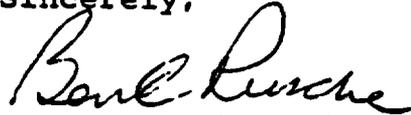
As outlined in the Department's siting guidelines for nuclear waste repositories (10CFR960), "[o]n the basis of the siting provisions specifying the basis for site evaluations in 960.3-1-5, the sites nominated as suitable for characterization shall be considered as to their order of preference as candidate sites for characterization" (S960.3-2-3). In the draft Environmental Assessments issued in December 1984, the Department included in section 7.4 of Chapter 7 a proposed order of preference of the proposed nominated sites based in part on several ways of combining site rankings under the individual guidelines. We have received a number of comments, including those of the Board, on the rankings and the methodology used in the draft EAs. In light of these comments and the concerns expressed by the States, the Department is reexamining the methodology used in the draft EAs to consider appropriate changes for the final EAs. Such a reexamination is now in progress. We believe that an independent review of ranking methodology by an organization such as the NAS Board would be useful in assuring an effective and credible document.

It is our understanding that the NAS Board on Radioactive Waste Management is willing to perform an independent review of the adequacy of a ranking methodology to be used in the final EAs scheduled for publication in December 1985. The Department would intend to append your review findings to the final EAs and to the Secretary's nomination and recommendation to the President. We can provide you with a copy of the ranking methodology to support development of the preferred order of sites at

least two weeks prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Board on October 1-3, 1985. For the review findings to be appended to the EAs, we would need to receive the Board's letter report or other appropriate document by November 15, 1985.

We look forward to your reply. Should you accept our request for this important review of the ranking methodology on behalf of the NAS, please contact Tom Isaacs or me so that we may arrange to provide you with all the pertinent information in a timely fashion.

Sincerely,



Ben C. Rusche, Director
Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management

cc: Peter Myers
National Academy of Sciences