



Department of Energy
Washington, D.C. 20585

WM DOCKET CONTROL
CENTRE

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RSE 4122 SDADM CER
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sent to RSE 11
116

Dr. Peter B. Myers
Staff Director
Board on Radioactive Waste Management
National Academy of Sciences
2101 Constitution Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20418

Dear Dr. Myers:

As a follow up to my letter to Frank L. Parker of August 29, 1985, we are pleased to provide for review by the Board on Radioactive Waste Management a report describing the ranking methodology to be used in the final Environmental Assessments (EAs) to accompany the nomination of sites as suitable for site characterization for the first geologic repository.

The ranking methodology has been developed in response to comments received from the Board and others regarding the adequacy of the three methods presented in the draft EAs. The methodology is a much refined and more detailed version of the "utility-estimation method" presented in the draft EAs. This method was regarded by most commenters on the draft EAs as being potentially the most appropriate if it were implemented in a fashion more strictly consistent with the professional decision-analysis literature.

The decision-aiding methodology is not intended to reduce the professional judgment required in selecting sites for characterization. It should, however, permit the scientific and value judgments to be made explicit to the reviewer. Furthermore, the methodology should permit sensitivity analyses that can be used to explore the sensitivity of the decision to alternative judgments. The methodology is not intended to be used, by itself, to determine which sites should be recommended; its purpose is to provide a technical basis, in conjunction with the provisions of the siting guidelines specifying diversity of rock types and other information, for such a decision. The decision as to which sites will be recommended will be made by the Secretary of Energy, based on the EAs.

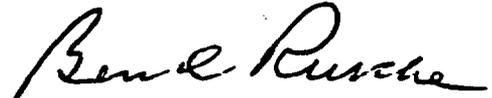
The description of the methodology contained herein is generic. The various steps in the methodology are discussed and illustrated specifically enough, however, so that the application to the repository siting decision should be clear. All assumptions and value judgments presented in the report are for illustrative purposes only. We believe that this methodology description is as you and my staff have discussed.

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We appreciate your undertaking this review on the schedule discussed in the August 29 letter. We believe that the importance of the site-recommendation decision and the increased public confidence following such a review of the methodology warrant such steps. We look forward to the meeting with the Board on October 1-3, and if we can be of further assistance until then, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,


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

Enclosure