

CONFEDERATED TRIBES AND BANDS

Yakima Indian Nation

NEWS

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RELEASE

We are obviously shocked, offended, and very displeased about the announcement of the selection of Hanford as one of the three sites for site characterization. We were promised at least two weeks notice of the date of the announcement. We were informed of the selection by the media.

To compound this immediate insult to this area, not only has Hanford been recommended by the Secretary of Energy for site characterization, but the President, without the study contemplated in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, has accepted this recommendation.

As a final blow and insult to this area, the study of a site for a second repository in the eastern United States has been likewise suspended. This is directly contrary to the purpose of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

The bulk of the high-level radioactive waste from power reactors comes from eastern states. Not only have the eastern states been successful with having Hanford selected to receive their waste, but they have been successful in keeping their lands from even being studied for a site for this waste. Hanford is already receiving the majority of the low-level civilian waste, and we are now eligible to receive their high-level waste also.

Since this appears to be a political issue, not a technical issue, we will await with great interest what our congressional delegation will do about this disregard, not only of this State and area, but also the violation of the intent of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

We have been fulfilling our responsibilities under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act and have demonstrated that Hanford should not be the place for the repository. Obviously, this has made no difference to this Administration. If there is no acceptable resolution through our congressional representatives to see that the purposes of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act is fulfilled, we will have to seriously consider litigation to protect not only the Yakima Indian Nation but the people in this area from this improper characterization.

We would hope that the State of Washington shares our concerns and position.


Melvin R. Sampson, Chairman
Yakima Tribal Council

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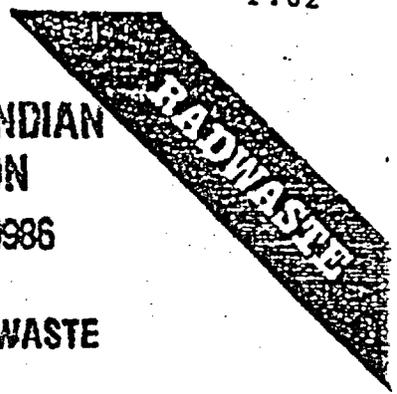
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DOE NEWS

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YAKIMA INDIAN
NATION
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NUCLEAR WASTE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 28, 1986

DOE ANNOUNCES DECISIONS ON HIGH-LEVEL WASTE REPOSITORY PROGRAM

The U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced today that sites in Nevada, Texas and Washington have been selected for site characterization as candidates for the Nation's first geologic repository for permanent disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.

DOE also announced that it has postponed indefinitely site-specific work for a second repository because of the progress in siting the first repository and the uncertainty of when a second repository might be needed. Areas previously identified for a possible second repository are no longer under active consideration. As required by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (NWP), Secretary of Energy John S. Herrington nominated five sites and recommended three of them to the President for site characterization. The President has approved the recommendation. This decision was based on the development and public review of extensive geologic and environmental data gained from site studies which began before enactment of the NWP. (Sites nominated and recommended are the same sites identified by DOE in draft Environmental Assessments issued for public review and comment in December 1984.)

(MORE)

The three candidate sites to undergo these studies, evaluations and comparisons are: Yucca Mountain in Nevada, Deaf Smith in Texas and Hanford in Washington. The Hanford site is near the lands of three Indian Tribes -- the Yakima Indian Nation, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Nez Perce Tribe. Two sites nominated, but not recommended for site characterization, are Richton Dome in Mississippi and Davis Canyon in Utah.

DOE's decision to reassess the timing of its activities toward identification of areas for study as potential candidates for a second repository resulted from a number of factors. They include:

- o The continuing progress in siting the first repository;
- o The expectation of receiving Congressional authorization to proceed with the development of a Monitored Retrievable Storage facility;
- o Projections of spent fuel generation are uncertain and have been declining;
- o While there exists in the law the limitation for emplacing more than 70,000 metric tons of spent fuel in the first repository before a second repository is in operation, emplacement of that amount is very far into the future and Congress need not reconsider specifically a second repository until at least the mid-1990's or much later;
- o A decision that spending hundreds of millions of dollars now on siting would be premature and unsound fiscal management.

Earlier this year, DOE identified, from among 17 States, crystalline rock bodies in Georgia, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Virginia and Wisconsin as potential candidates for a second repository. With the announced postponement, the 17 States are no longer under active consideration.

Under the NWPA, DOE is authorized to construct the first repository and conduct siting activities for a second. The NWPA does not authorize construction of a second repository. DOE intends to continue studies for a second repository as required by the NWPA, but those studies will focus only on technical issues.

DOE will concentrate its efforts on continued successful progress on the development of the disposal system including the first geologic repository, the associated transportation system and implementation of an MRS program. DOE believes a centralized MRS to receive, consolidate and package spent fuel for bulk transport to the repository will enhance the overall disposal system. Under contracts with utilities, DOE is obligated to begin receipt of spent fuel for disposal by 1998.

"Today's announcement is further confirmation of the priority the Administration has placed on ensuring that wastes produced from nuclear-generated electricity and U. S. defense activities are stored and disposed of in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner," said Ben C. Rusche, Director of DOE's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management.

Nuclear power now provides more than 15 percent of the Nation's electricity and commercial and defense high-level waste now exists in about 30 states.