



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

January 8, 1993

The Honorable Ivan Selin
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with section 113(b)(3) of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, as amended (NWPAA), the Department has prepared the seventh in a series of reports on the progress of site characterization at the Yucca Mountain candidate site. The document is entitled "Site Characterization Progress Report: Yucca Mountain, Nevada" and covers the period from April 1, 1992 through September 30, 1992.

The Civilian Radioactive Waste Management Program made significant progress during the reporting period at the Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Project. Several important advances were made in the surface-based testing program including: initiation of borehole drilling utilizing the new, state-of-the-art LM-300 drill rig which employs dry drilling and coring techniques; neutron access borehole drilling to evaluate infiltration processes; excavations to aid geologic mapping; and trenching in Midway Valley to study Quaternary faulting.

A Floodplain Assessment and Statement of Findings was published in the Federal Register which concluded there would be no significant impact nor cumulative impacts on floodplains resulting from Exploratory Studies Facility activities.

The National Academy of Sciences' National Research Council released its report entitled "Ground Water at Yucca Mountain: How High Can It Rise?" which concluded that none of the evidence cited as proof of groundwater upwelling in and around Yucca Mountain could be reasonably attributed to that process and that significant water table excursions to the repository design level are not shown by the geologic record.

The June 29, 1992, earthquake near Yucca Mountain provided scientists with a wealth of information relevant to understanding the neotectonics of the area and the geometry of faults at depth. Early findings suggest that accelerations recorded were well within proposed design limits for the surface waste handling facilities.

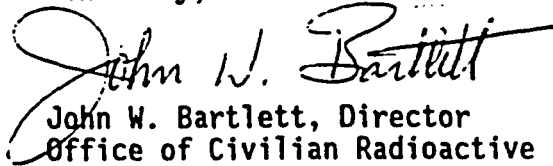
Nevada State agencies continued the timely and professional processing and issuance of requisite permits including air quality, underground injection control and supplemental water appropriations.

1/19...To EDO for Appropriate Action...Cpys to: Chairman, Comrs, OGC
RF--(ltr only)...Report Available in EDO....

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PDR COMMS NRCC
CORRESPONDENCE PDR

The Department will continue to issue progress reports covering 6-month periods, as specified in the NWPA.

Sincerely,


John W. Bartlett, Director
Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management

Enclosure

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