

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

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SUBJECT: Webstreaming of proceedings related to Yucca Mountain licensing hearing

ACTION: Appropriate
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NOTES: ASLB/EDO for appropriate action

FILE LOCATION: ADAMS

DATE DUE: **DATE SIGNED:**

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August 16, 2007

Commissioner Dale E. Klein, Chairman
Commissioner Gregory B. Jaczko
Commissioner Peter B. Lyons
Commissioner Edward McGaffigan, Jr.
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

SUBJECT: *Webstreaming of proceedings related to Yucca Mountain licensing hearing*

Dear Commissioners:

As representatives of Affected Units of Local Government (“AULGs”) who are affected by the licensing proceeding for the proposed Yucca Mountain high-level radioactive waste repository, we are writing to express our strong support for a proposal by the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (“ASLB”) regarding webstreaming of proceedings related to the Yucca Mountain licensing hearing.

We are pleased that the ASLB has made a commitment to use webstreaming for the Yucca Mountain licensing hearing itself. However, webstreaming is not currently available for the case management conferences that the ASLB has been conducting at the NRC’s headquarters in Maryland, nor is it assured for the case management conferences and prehearing conferences that the ASLB is scheduled to hold in advance of the hearing. These conferences are important for all potential parties and participants because they will establish the rules that govern the hearing and the issues that will be heard.

While the ASLB has offered video-conferencing of the case management conferences from its Maryland hearing room, we must travel to the NRC’s hearing facility in Las Vegas to watch the proceedings, hundreds of miles from many of our county seats. Therefore, video-conferencing has little or no practical value to many of us. It has puzzled us that the ASLB has not offered webstreaming of these conferences, given that the technology is available and commonly used by a number of federal agencies, including the federal Drug Enforcement Agency, the Department of State, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Internal Revenue Service, the Department of Education, the Federal Elections Commission, and the Federal Communications Commission.

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At a meeting between AULG representatives and members of the NRC Staff, held in Las Vegas on June 19-20, we raised our concern regarding the apparent unavailability of webstreaming for proceedings other than the licensing hearing itself. At that time, NRC staff informed us that to date, the ASLB has not had sufficient resources to offer webstreaming of its Yucca Mountain-related proceedings. It is our understanding that the ASLB recently proposed a pilot project to the Commissioners, which would test the use of webstreaming for other related proceedings such as case management conferences and pre-hearing conferences.

We strongly support the concept of webstreaming of case management conferences and pre-hearing conferences. We urge you to support the ASLB's proposed pilot project, and also to make a long-term commitment to provide webstreaming of all Yucca Mountain-related proceedings that may be conducted before the ASLB or the Commission.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ronald Damele
Public Works Director
On behalf of the ten Affected Units of Local Government

cc: Affected Units of Local Government
Lawrence Kokajko, NRC