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General Comment

See attached file(s)

Attachments

NRC-comment2

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Add= *C. Pineda (C/15)*

In my opinion construction of the Yucca Mountain High Level Nuclear Waste Repository site could become unnecessary if the USA had a long range nuclear fuel cycle plan that included commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing. The absence of reprocessing has resulted in the build up of hazardous radioactive material that will increase as long as nuclear power plants operate in the USA. This absence of reprocessing has created a disparate attempt to isolate these hazardous materials, within spent fuel rods, from the environment for "eternity" within a facility such as the proposed Yucca Mountain site.

Commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing in the USA was discontinued in 1976 when the Carter Administration set nuclear fuel policy to be "once-through" such that commercial nuclear fuel would not be reprocessed out of fear of the possibility that Plutonium or other fissionable materials might be "diverted" into nuclear weapons. Nuclear power plants operated outside of the USA have not followed the US example of "once-through" and do practice reprocessing of nuclear fuels. Commercial nuclear is reprocessed in several countries including France, Great Britain, Russia, and also to a lesser extent in Belgium, Germany, Japan, India, and Italy. According to your website reprocessing of fissionable material is still accomplished within the USA for the US Department of Defense (DOD) for the production of nuclear weapon material and for the spent fuel from nuclear-powered naval vessels. The NRC the DOD oversees reprocessing programs at Department of Energy facilities such as in Hanford, WA, and Savannah River, SC. These wastes as well as those wastes at a formerly operating commercial reprocessing facility at West Valley, NY, are not regulated by the NRC.

However, in my opinion commercial nuclear power, with reprocessing of spent fuel, could play a larger role in the context of the current global threat from climate change, aggravated by the emissions of carbon dioxide from the use of fossil fuels. Nuclear power stations within the USA, with governmental long-range nuclear-fuel-cycle policy, that includes reprocessing, could unleash almost unlimited "clean" energy that is free of carbon dioxide emissions. Unfortunately the radioactive material accumulated as waste product of the misguided US government policy of disallowing commercial reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel has brought the specter of the Yucca Mountain site to Nevada.