

August 28, 2017

Ms. Kristine L. Svinicki
Chairperson
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop O-16G4
Washington, DC 20555-0001

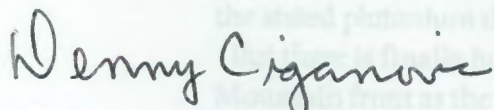
RE: Thanks to NRC for reconsidering Yucca Mountain for storage

Dear Ms. Svinicki:

Attached is an Editorial from the Charleston, SC Post and Courier that mentions the NRC recently voted to revive the licensing process for the project.

I would like to say "thank you " to you and the commissioners for doing this and am hopeful it will result in the final approval of the site considered the "safest place for long term storage" available in the US.

Sincerely,



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Proceed with Yucca Mountain

Savannah River Site has for years been the nation's de facto nuclear waste dump with the abandonment of the national waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nev., in 2011. Tons of high-level waste are currently stored at SRS from its decades as a weapons producer, and more recently, as the federal government's destination for weapons-grade plutonium.

Matters reached a low point during the Obama administration, when it pulled the plug on the Yucca Mountain project, as a political favor to then-Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev. Meanwhile, the administration attempted to eliminate funding for a facility at SRS to turn the plutonium into commercial fuel.

And the feds then reneged on an agreement to pay South Carolina a penalty of \$100 million a year if it failed to advance the stated plutonium disposal goals.

But there is finally hope on the Yucca Mountain front as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission voted 2-1 on Aug. 8 to revive the licensing process for the project, on which some \$15 billion was spent before its shutdown. That decision puts the NRC firmly on the side of those who are challenging the closure, including the states of South Carolina and Washington, and Aiken County.

Meanwhile, S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson filed suit on Aug. 7 to recover the fines due the state for 2017 from the Department of Energy for failing to move plutonium out of the state according to schedule. Under that agreement, the state is due \$1 million a day for the first 100 days of the year,

each year, through 2021.

In the suit, Mr. Wilson declared that the federal government can't "leave South Carolina as the permanent dumping ground for weapons-grade plutonium." During its long history, SRS has been a production facility, not a waste dump. The state should continue to resist efforts by the feds to use it for high-level waste disposal.

Of course, the Yucca Mountain project will continue to be opposed by Nevada politicians, but Sen. Reid has retired and the project has bipartisan support elsewhere in Congress, recognizing that it is the best location for high-level radioactive waste produced by nuclear power plants, as well as defense waste.

Indeed, Congress initiated the project in the early 1980s and has steadfastly supported it, despite the previous administration's efforts to shut it down. The federal government is mandated to provide a permanent disposal site for high-level nuclear waste that is now stored on site. The repository has been largely financed by ratepayers through surcharges on electricity generated by commercial nuclear power.

Despite the failed Fairfield nuclear projects, there are currently 100 nuclear reactors producing power, with high-level waste as a byproduct. Eventually, that material has to go somewhere, and despite the protests of Nevada pols, the geologic repository at remote Yucca Mountain — known as "the most studied site on earth" — is the safest place for long-term storage. It's good to see the NRC move again to advance the project.

A10: Thursday, August 24, 2017

The Post and Courier

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