



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

January 5, 2018

The Honorable Dayna Bochco
Chair, California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105-2219

Dear Madam Chair:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your November 2, 2017, letter to the NRC and the U.S. Department of Energy concerning the storage of spent nuclear fuel at operating and decommissioning nuclear reactors, including those in California.

The NRC's mission is to license and regulate the Nation's civilian use of radioactive materials to provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection of public health and safety, to promote the common defense and security, and to protect the environment. Proven technology is used at nuclear power plant sites that provides for the safe and secure storage of spent fuel, either in spent fuel pools or dry storage casks. In addition, through the agency's ongoing regulatory oversight process the NRC staff continues to examine the performance of these onsite storage options to provide for the early discovery and mitigation of any safety issues.

The NRC has concluded that storage of spent fuel at reactor sites can safely continue until a repository becomes available. Regarding the potential for a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, the NRC staff completed and published the final volumes of the safety evaluation report in January 2015 and issued an Environmental Impact Statement supplement in May 2016. The adjudicatory hearing, which must be completed before a licensing decision can be made, remains suspended due to a lack of appropriated funds. Should Congress provide funding to support continuation of the Yucca Mountain licensing activities, the Commission would provide direction to the staff on the next steps for the licensing proceeding.

Separately, the NRC staff is currently conducting the acceptance review of an application for a consolidated interim storage facility for spent nuclear fuel in New Mexico. If the application is accepted for review, the staff estimates that the safety, security, and environmental reviews needed to reach a licensing decision would take approximately 3 years, with additional time required for adjudication if a hearing is requested.

I appreciate the California Coastal Commission's interest in this important matter. If you need anything additional, please contact me or have your staff contact Marc Dapas, Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, at (301) 415-0595.

Sincerely,



Kristine L. Svinicki

cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Kamala Harris
Senator Cory Gardner
Senator Joe Manchin III
Congressman Darrell Issa
Congressman Salud Carbajal
Congressman Jared Huffman
Congressman Fred Upton
Congressman Bobby L. Rush
CA Senator Mike McGuire
CA Senator Bill Monning
CA Senator Patricia Bates
CA Assemblyman Jim Wood
CA Assemblyman Jordan Cunningham
CA Assemblyman Rocky Chávez
The Honorable Benjamin Friedman, NOAA
The Honorable John Laird, CA Natural Resources
The Honorable Rick Perry, DOE