



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

July 7, 2022

CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Mike Levin  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Levin:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your June 2, 2022, letter requesting information regarding the regulatory approach for the potential deployment of a hot cell at independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI) sites such as San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS). Establishing of a hot cell at an ISFSI site would require an NRC licensing action that would include opportunities for stakeholder participation.

The NRC's regulations specify that dry cask storage licensees must be able to safely remove, with no operational safety problems, the spent nuclear fuel from storage for further processing or disposal. A hot cell, also referred to as a dry transfer system, is not required to meet these regulations. It is one means available to licensees to conduct certain activities associated with handling spent nuclear fuel, such as the potential unloading of spent fuel from a storage cask and loading of spent fuel into a transportation cask. To provide enhanced guidance on the regulatory approach, the NRC issued the Standard Review Plan for Spent Fuel Dry Storage Systems and Facilities (NUREG-2215), which addresses fuel retrievability in spent fuel storage applications. Other options include, but are not limited to, use of a wet transfer system if the site's spent fuel pool is still operational, use of an overpack, or direct transfer of a spent fuel canister into a transportation cask.

If a licensee were to pursue a dry transfer system, the NRC staff would review the proposed system using the regulations in Part 50 or Part 72 of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), and the licensee would need to submit an environmental report for NRC review and evaluation under 10 CFR Part 51. Additionally, the NRC staff would review the proposed system for compliance with the radiation protection requirements in 10 CFR Part 20. At this time, the NRC is not aware of any licensee that is considering a dry transfer system.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or have your staff contact Eugene Dacus, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. T. Hanson".

Christopher T. Hanson