



Sustainable Fuel Cycle TASK FORCE

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June 3, 2009

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: YUCCA MOUNTAIN FY2010 FUNDING

We are writing in support of continued Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 funding for the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Yucca Mountain repository license application (LA) and the companion technical and scientific review of the application by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

The NRC has found the LA and accompanying documentation to be of high quality and accepted the application for the extensive public review which by law is required to take no longer than 3-4 years. Such a review will require significant resources on the part of DOE and the NRC to ensure a timely and high quality review. Unfortunately, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 budget, which was passed in March of this year, reduced the funding for this critical national program by \$100 million. For FY2010, the Administration has requested \$196.8 million, yet another \$100 million budget reduction at a time when funding is critical to maintaining the LA review process.

While we believe that the \$196.8 million request for DOE is well short of the funding needed to maintain a viable licensing process, we are encouraged by the continuing support in the Congress and interest in increasing FY2010 DOE funding to a sufficient level for the ongoing regulatory review. The Nuclear Energy Institute has estimated that \$340 million is required in FY2010 by the DOE to fully support a thorough and rigorous NRC Yucca Mountain licensing review.

As the New York Times noted in its May 21, 2009, editorial (Follow the Science on Yucca): “Before approving this truncated budget, Congress needs to ensure that it contains enough money to sustain a genuine licensing effort.” The Times continued by stating... “We have no idea whether the Yucca Mountain would be a suitable burial ground for nuclear wastes. But after the government has labored for more than two decades and spent almost \$10 billion to get the site ready for licensing hearings, it would be foolish not to complete the process with a good-faith evaluation.” The editorial can found at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/21/opinion/21thu2.html>. We agree.

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For the record, the Yucca Mountain continues to remain a technically and scientifically qualified site, according to the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board chartered by Congress to provide independent technical and scientific reviews of the DOE nuclear waste program. In addition, one of the findings of the just released U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Institute for 21st Century Energy report ("Revisiting America's Nuclear Waste Policy") is that Yucca Mountain is the "safest and best option for disposing of the country's used nuclear fuel and nuclear waste given the parameters of U.S. law." The report can be found at http://www.energyxxi.org/reports/Nuclear_Waste_Policy.pdf.

Abandoning Yucca Mountain now would leave spent nuclear fuel and high-level nuclear waste stranded in 121 sites in 39 states across the country for up to one hundred years without a viable alternative for disposition. The Yucca Mountain project has been approved by strong majorities in the Congress in 2002 and cannot be terminated without Congressional consent, under procedures mandated by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, as amended.

We appreciate your continuing interest in Yucca Mountain and look forward to serving as an information resource as the FY2010 appropriations process proceeds.

Please contact:
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Attachments
FY2010 DOE Yucca Mountain budget request
FY2010 NRC Yucca Mountain budget request