



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD
2300 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1300
Arlington, VA 22201

August 31, 2000

Honorable Joe Barton
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Committee on Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Room 2125, Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6115

Dear Mr. Barton:

Enclosed are responses to the questions posed in your letter of July 20, 2000, to Dr. Debra Knopman following her appearance before the Subcommittee on Energy and Power on June 23, 2000. The Board provides independent advice on the technical issues associated with the management of the country's commercial spent nuclear fuel and defense high-level radioactive waste. The Board offers its technical views to help inform the larger consideration of issues that faces the Department of Energy and the Congress in their evaluation of the suitability of the Yucca Mountain candidate repository site.

The Board is keenly aware that many of the issues that must be considered in making decisions in this policy area are technical ones, but others are not. Regarding site suitability, we believe that Congress and the Secretary will find it useful to have our views on the adequacy of current information to technically support a possible site recommendation. As noted in our responses, a site recommendation can be made at any time, depending in part on how much uncertainty policy-makers are prepared to accept.

Please let me or the Board's staff know if we can provide you or your staff with any additional information on the enclosed responses.

Sincerely,

{Signed by}

Jared L. Cohon
Chairman

Enclosure