

DOE NEWS

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Statement of Secretary of Energy Abraham on Release of Inspector General's Report on Yucca Mountain

I am pleased that the Department's Office of Inspector General's review of concerns regarding potential bias in the evaluation of the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada has concluded that there was no evidence to "substantiate the concern that bias compromised the integrity of the site evaluation process."

The Inspector General's conclusion is based on a review of documents associated with the evaluation, including the draft Site Recommendation Consideration Report. The Inspector General also conducted over 200 interviews of knowledgeable Federal and contractor officials, including the membership of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board. The Board is an independent body established by Congress charged with evaluating the technical and scientific validity of the department's efforts to study Yucca Mountain.

While the Inspector General found a limited number of statements in a "Note to Reviewers" which appeared in an early, never issued, working draft Overview which the Inspector General concluded, "...could be viewed as suggesting a premature conclusion regarding the suitability of Yucca Mountain," it should be noted that the Department objected to those statements during its own review of the documents and those statements were removed from subsequent drafts.

It is my firm belief and Departmental policy that all Federal, laboratory and contractor employees must perform their work in a manner that reflects the fundamental fairness and science-based approach necessary to produce studies and support analytical conclusions in which the public can have full trust and confidence. Accordingly, I am today reaffirming our commitment to a site suitability evaluation process which is objective, unbiased, and based on sound science, and conveying that reaffirmation of policy to all relevant parties.

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