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DOE Marks Milestone in Submitting Yucca Mountain License Application

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced submittal of a license application (LA) to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) seeking authorization to construct America’s first repository for spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. The 8,600 page application describes DOE’s plan to safely isolate spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste in tunnels deep underground at Yucca Mountain, a remote ridge on federally controlled land in the Mojave Desert 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas. Currently, the waste is stored at 121 temporary locations in 39 states across the nation.

“Submittal of the Yucca Mountain license application will further encourage the expansion of nuclear power in the United States, which is absolutely critical to our energy security, environmental goals, and national security,” Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman said. “This license application is the culmination of more than two decades of expert scientific research and engineering, and represents a major milestone for the Department. We are confident that the NRC’s rigorous review process will confirm that the Yucca Mountain repository will provide for the safe disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste and will be protective of human health and the environment now and into the future.”

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (NWPA), as amended, established a process for the identification, characterization and approval of a site for a permanent geologic repository and for its licensing by the NRC. In 2002, the President and both chambers of Congress designated Yucca Mountain as the site for the development of the nation’s first permanent repository.

Today’s application begins a new phase for the Yucca Mountain Project. The NRC will conduct an initial review to determine whether to accept the application for formal review. The licensing process, pursuant to the NWPA and NRC regulations, is scheduled to be conducted over a three-year period.

The LA is accompanied by a Final Environmental Impact Statement, as well as approximately 200 key supporting documents. DOE has also made publicly available more than 3.6 million documents relating to the Yucca Mountain licensing proceeding on the NRC’s Licensing Support Network.

Yucca Mountain was approved by the Congress and President Bush as the site for the nation’s first permanent spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste geologic repository in 2002. For more information on the License Application and DOE’s Yucca Mountain Project visit: <http://www.ocrwm.doe.gov>