



THE ROLE OF THE U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION (NRC) IN THE SITE RECOMMENDATION PROCESS FOR YUCCA MOUNTAIN, NEVADA

WHAT IS NRC'S ROLE?

- The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 requires NRC to provide preliminary comments on certain information in any Department of Energy (DOE) site recommendation.
- NRC's comments will be "preliminary" and will address the extent to which the DOE information seems to be sufficient for inclusion in any potential license application.
- NRC will comment on the sufficiency of the at-depth site characterization analysis, the waste form and packaging proposal, and what, if any, additional DOE data or analyses are needed.
- DOE must make NRC's preliminary comments part of DOE's site recommendation process.
- NRC will perform a detailed licensing review later, if DOE submits a license application.

HOW WILL NRC'S COMMENTS BE USED?

NRC's preliminary comments will provide an independent indication to the President and the Congress on whether the DOE has acquired, developed, and assembled sufficient information for a license application.

WHAT WILL DOE'S SITE RECOMMENDATION INCLUDE?

The law requires the Secretary of Energy to submit to the President of the United States a site recommendation report that consists of the following seven sections:

1. A description of the proposed repository.
2. A description of the waste form, waste package and their interaction with the geologic system.
3. A discussion of safety-related site characterization data.
4. A final environmental impact statement.
5. Preliminary comments of the NRC on whether the extent of at-depth site characterization and the description of the waste form proposal are sufficient for inclusion in a potential license application.
6. Views of the Governor and legislature of any State, or the governing body of any affected Indian tribe, and the response of the Secretary of Energy to those views.
7. Any impact report submitted under the Act by the State of Nevada.

If the President accepts the site recommendation, the report is forwarded to the Congress. If approved by the Congress, DOE will prepare a license application seeking NRC authorization to construct a repository at Yucca Mountain.

WHAT IS THE SITE RECOMMENDATION CONSIDERATION REPORT (SRCR)?

- If DOE decides to recommend the Yucca Mountain site, then a DOE report, the SRCR, will be submitted to the public for comment. DOE will hold public hearings on the SRCR.
- The SRCR will inform the public of the technical reasons why DOE believes that Yucca Mountain is suitable as a potential repository site.
- In addition to descriptions of the proposed repository, waste form, waste package and safety-related site characterization data (items 1-3 above), the SRCR will describe and discuss analyses used to predict repository performance.
- The SRCR would be one of a number of DOE documents that NRC will review during the development of NRC's preliminary comments on DOE's site recommendation.

"For more information on NRC's program to review Yucca Mountain, visit us on the Internet at <http://www.nrc.gov/NMSS/DWM.htm>"