
DOE NEWS

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Energy Secretary Announces Key Steps in Site Analysis of Yucca Mountain

Extends Public Comment Period An Additional 30 Days

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced the dates, locations, and times for public hearings in Nevada to receive comments on whether or not the Secretary of Energy should recommend Yucca Mountain, Nevada, as a site for a potential geological repository for nuclear waste. The Department also issued today the *Yucca Mountain Preliminary Site Suitability Evaluation*, which provides a preliminary assessment of the Yucca Mountain site's performance against the strict safety standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency. The preliminary evaluation is additional information that is intended to facilitate public review and comment on a possible site recommendation.

With the scheduling of public hearings and the release of the *Preliminary Site Suitability Evaluation*, the Department also announced that the public comment period on a potential site recommendation by the Secretary will be extended to September 20, 2001. DOE began the public comment period on May 4, 2001, when the *Yucca Mountain Science and Engineering Report* was issued.

In order to facilitate public scrutiny of the data related to the suitability of the Yucca Mountain site, the Secretary is also directing the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management to send the preliminary evaluation to stakeholders in this process – including opponents of the siting of a repository at Yucca Mountain and is asking them to provide comments either as part of the written record or as part of several public hearings. He is also directing that the study be sent to a number of leaders in the scientific community and is asking them to participate in the public comment process.

“Any decision regarding a permanent repository for this nation's nuclear waste will be made based on sound science. The measures I am taking today are designed to assist me in this effort. I am committed to making sure that we arrive at the right decision for America,” said Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham.

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Information on the scheduled public hearings follows:

September 5, 2001: Suncoast Hotel and Casino, 9090 Alta Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89144, 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm – Poster Session; 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm – Hearing.

September 12, 2001: Longstreet Inn and Casino, Highway 373, Armagosa Valley, Nevada 89020; 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm – Poster Session; 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm – Hearing.

September 13, 2001: Bob Ruud Community Center, 150 Highway North #160, Pahrump, Nevada 89048, 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm – Poster Session; 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm – Hearing.

As required by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, DOE is holding these hearings in the vicinity of the Yucca Mountain site for the purposes of informing the residents in the area and receiving their comments regarding DOE's consideration of the site for possible recommendation. These hearings will not be trial-type evidentiary hearings that require a lawyer. They will be informal, and DOE intends to use a facilitator in an effort to ensure they are fair and productive.

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