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Secretary Bodman Provides Report to the President and the Congress on the Need for a Second Repository for Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste

Washington D.C. – U.S. Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman today transmitted *The Report to the President and the Congress by the Secretary of Energy on the Need for a Second Repository* to the President and the Congress. The report was submitted in accordance with section 161 of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, as amended (NWPA). Section 161 requires the Secretary to report to the President and to Congress on or after January 1, 2007, but not later than January 1, 2010, on the need for a second repository for the Nation's spent nuclear fuel (SNF) and high-level radioactive waste (HLW).

"Unless Congress raises or eliminates the current statutory capacity limit of 70,000 metric tons of heavy metal, a second repository will be needed," Secretary Bodman said. "The statutory limit is not based on any technical considerations, and the repository layout at Yucca Mountain can be expanded to accommodate three times the amount of fuel allowed under the current arbitrary cap."

The NWPA establishes a process for the siting, construction and operation of one or more national repositories for permanent disposal of the Nation's SNF and HLW. In 1987, after the Department of Energy (DOE) had conducted studies of nine potential repository sites located throughout the United States, Congress amended the NWPA and selected the Yucca Mountain site in Nye County, Nevada as the only site for further study for the first national repository. In 1987, Congress also terminated all second repository program activities.

The NWPA currently sets a statutory capacity limit of 70,000 metric tons of heavy metal (MTHM) for the Nation's first repository, until a second repository is in operation. The inventories of commercial and Federal Government SNF and HLW in the United States are currently projected to exceed 70,000 MTHM by 2010. Assuming all existing operating commercial nuclear reactors in the United States request license extensions from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to operate for 60 years, the projected amount of SNF from these reactors requiring disposal is estimated to be approximately 130,000 MTHM.

A copy of this report is available on the OCRWM website at www.ocrwm.doe.gov.

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