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Panel on Transportation & Systems Meets with DOE in Arlington

As part of its congressional mandate to perform an independent technical review of the Department of Energy's (DOE) system to manage civilian spent nuclear fuel, the NWTRB's Panel on Transportation & Systems has scheduled a two-day meeting with the DOE to review system safety and human factors engineering, the conceptual design for the planned monitored retrievable studies facility (MRS), and transportation-related facility studies. The meeting has been scheduled for March 10 and 11, 1992, and will be held at the Board's Arlington, Virginia, offices. Sessions will begin at 9:00 A.M., on both days and are open to the public.

Tuesday, March 10, will be devoted to discussions of system safety and human factors engineering and the MRS conceptual design. From its inception, the Board has underscored the need for the DOE to incorporate the precepts of system safety and human factors engineering into the waste management process. The DOE has had a consultant develop a draft program plan for system safety. On Tuesday, March 10, representatives of the DOE and the management and operations contractor (M&O) will review the elements of this draft plan, the features being considered for incorporation into the plan, and initial thoughts on how to implement the plan. There also will be follow-up discussions on the DOE's progress in incorporating human factors considerations into its program.

The DOE intends to build a monitored retrievable storage (MRS) facility that would provide away-from-reactor interim storage of spent fuel prior to disposal. The simplest version would offer pure storage capability. Functions other than storage — such as accumulation and consolidation of shipment loads into larger loads — also have been considered as possible useful expansions of the MRS concept. A new conceptual design for the MRS is being completed and the panel is interested in seeing its key features.

On Wednesday, March 11, the panel will review two studies the DOE has been conducting. One study, the Facility Infrastructure and Capability Assessment (FICA), examines capabilities — such as crane capacity and existence of rail spurs — at the various sites. The second study, the Near Site Transportation Infrastructure (NSTI) study, examines the modal options for transporting the fuel from each of the reactor sites. The Wednesday meeting will adjourn at noon. Transcripts of the meeting will be available on a library-loan basis beginning April 20, 1992.
