



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD
2300 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1300
Arlington, VA 22201-3367

January 6, 2003

President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

With this letter, I am informing you of my decision to step down from the U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, effective January 17, 2003.

It has been my honor to serve for six years as a member of the Board, but other professional and family responsibilities have accumulated and are demanding my time. As you know, Board members serve in a part-time capacity; most of us have full-time jobs. In my case, I am Associate Director of RAND's Science and Technology research unit. To avoid any real or apparent conflict of interest while serving on the Board, I have recused myself from matters at RAND involving the U.S. Department of Energy, the National Laboratories, and any entities involved in nuclear waste issues. Stepping down from the Board will enable me to work with the DOE and the National Laboratories as part of my management and research responsibilities at RAND.

The integrity of the science and engineering that support the proposed repository at Yucca Mountain matters a great deal in a project of such extraordinary consequence, longevity, and uncertainty. An effective Board is integral to the trust-building process. Since its inception in 1987, the Board has provided the Nation's only continuous, comprehensive, objective, and independent technical review of the DOE's civilian high-level radioactive waste management program. The Board's reputation for objectivity and independence has been earned by the individual Board members through their own conduct and by the Board as a whole through its willingness to openly critique the work of the DOE and its contractors. My hope is that the Board's standing remains high in the years to come.

The Board is more than just its members. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and applaud the exemplary service of the Board's professional staff. These individuals perform at the highest level of expertise and professionalism with little public recognition. They have made enormous contributions to bringing about significant improvements in the DOE's analysis of the proposed repository at Yucca Mountain.

I have deeply appreciated the opportunity to serve the Nation as a Board member. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debra S. Knopman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Debra S. Knopman