



**Department of Energy**

Washington, DC 20585

July 3, 2001

To: Virgilio, NMSS  
Appropriate Action  
Ref. G20010191

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Mr. William D. Travers  
Executive Director for Operations  
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Two White Flint North  
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Mr. Travers:

Thank you for your June 7, 2001, letter in which you expressed concern about the impact of the timing of release and the nature of information to be provided in the Department's *Supplemental Science and Performance Analysis Report (SSPA)* and *Preliminary Site Suitability Evaluation (PSSE)*. This letter provides the Department's current plans for the release of these documents.

We are nearing completion of the SSPA and the PSSE. The SSPA will consist of two volumes: Volume 1, *Scientific Bases and Analyses*, and Volume 2, *Performance Analyses*. Volume 1 contains science and engineering data collected since the completion of the *Yucca Mountain Science and Engineering Report (YMS&ER)*, studies and quantification of some uncertainties related to the total system performance assessment (TSPA), and an assessment of a wider range of thermal operating modes. Volume 2 contains sensitivity analyses conducted to evaluate the effects of incorporating the updated models, and a supplemental performance assessment model based upon the TSPA described in the YMS&ER and updated to include newly-quantified uncertainties and evaluate system performance over a range of thermal operating modes. We plan to issue Volume 1 during the week of July 9, 2001, and Volume 2 during the week of July 16, 2001. It should be noted that the SSPA does not represent a change in our baseline design, but rather is an evaluation of potential options for operation.

The PSSE will provide the Department's preliminary evaluation of the Yucca Mountain site as a repository against the pre- and post-closure site suitability guidelines in the Department's proposed 10 CFR Part 963. The PSSE is based on the information and analyses described in the YMS&ER, supplemented by the information and analyses contained in the SSPA. We anticipate issuing the PSSE near the end of July 2001.

We have conducted internal reviews of these documents, and certain key supporting documents, to ensure technical accuracy and internal consistency. The SSPA and PSSE have been delayed since my May 7, 2001, letter to you to accommodate these reviews, and to incorporate a preliminary analysis of the EPA's recently issued "Public Health and Environmental Radiation Protection Standards for Yucca Mountain, Nevada," codified at 40 CFR Part 197. We will inform you of the results of our reviews in the near future.



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In view of the above, we now anticipate that the Commission's preliminary sufficiency comments would be needed by November 1, 2001. Throughout site characterization, DOE has provided NRC with an extensive foundation of scientific and engineering studies. We believe that the currently available technical information provides a reasonable basis for NRC to prepare its sufficiency comments. We will continue our interactions with your staff in support of your review and request that we be informed of any additional information or Department actions that might be necessary to facilitate your review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lake H. Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "L" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Lake H. Barrett, Acting Director  
Office of Civilian Radioactive  
Waste Management

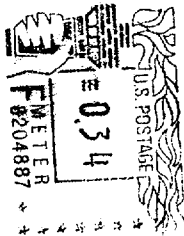
United States Department of Energy

1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20585

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Executive Director for Operations  
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