



United States Department of Energy

Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20585

For Immediate Release: October 1, 2001**News Media Contact: Joe Davis, 202/586-4940**

Abraham Orders Extension of Comment Period on Yucca Mountain Project To Friday, October 19, 2001

- Latest Extension Results In 168 Day Comment Period -

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Washington - In addition to the public hearings for Amargosa Valley and Pahrump, Nevada, the extended hearing session at the Las Vegas Science Center, and the 29 additional field hearing sessions that were announced last week, U.S. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham announced today that he has directed the Department of Energy to extend the closure date for the Yucca Mountain Project's comment period to October 19, 2001. The current comment period opened on May 4, 2001.

This change to the closure date brings into line the closing date for comments and the new dates for hearings in Amargosa Valley and Pahrump, originally scheduled for September 12 and 13 but postponed to October 10 and 12 as a result of the attacks of September 11. The original closure date for the current comment period was September 20, 2001. The new deadline of October 19 means that in the most recent comment period Nevada citizens will have been provided a total of 168 days to submit their comments as part of the site recommendation process.

"This two week extension of the comment period provides Nevada citizens significant additional time and opportunity to express their views," said Secretary Abraham.

Abraham announced earlier that the Department's Las Vegas Science Center would serve as an extended hearing facility for Nevada citizens to visit, receive information, and provide official testimony through the end of the comment period.

"The opinions of Nevada citizens are important. I recognize the difficulty families face in freeing time on their schedules, and I am committed to ensuring that Nevada citizens have reasonable opportunities to participate in this important process. The availability of the Las Vegas Science Center and the latest extension of the comment period gives Nevada citizens the flexibility to submit their comments over the next few weeks of continuous public hearing session," said Abraham.

In addition, Abraham ordered the Department to conduct hearings across Nevada and in California, 29 in all, to provide citizens additional opportunities to comment on the Yucca Mountain Project. Comments received by the Department prior to October 19 will be given equal consideration in the course of the site recommendation process. The Secretary has also indicated that there will be additional public involvement opportunities this fall to allow public comment on issues that could not have been raised during the current comment period.

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R-01-167