Local Community View of Yucca Mountain Repository

Yucca Mountain – What You Will Never Read in Nevada Newspapers

By

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Facts About Yucca Mountain Repository

- The Nuclear Waste Policy Act, as amended in 1987, designates Yucca Mountain alone to be studied.
- Yucca Mountain is in the Mohave Desert on Federal property in Nye County about 100 miles from Las Vegas.
- 18 miles from the nearest private property.
- Average annual rainfall between 4 and 8 inches.
- Repository planned 1,000 feet below the mountain crest and 1,000 feet above the water table.
- Waste package design is nearly 3 inches of highly corrosion resistant metal.
- Highest annual radiation dose for a million years is about 2 mrem.

Facts About Nye County

- Safety of Nye County citizens.
- Any impact or safety issue with the Yucca Mountain repository would be to Nye County residents.
- Nye County policy of active engagement and oversight.
- Nye County is home to Nevada Test Site.
- Nye County citizens have a long history of helping the Federal government do things “nuclear”.
- Nye County is again willing to step up for the benefit of the United States.
Facts About Nye County (cont)

• Nye County actively involved in Yucca Mountain licensing process
  – 7 contentions filed related to public safety, environmental concerns, and emergency response
  – All specify simple (and inexpensive) remedies
• Statement in Nye County contention filing
  – “So long as the Yucca Mountain repository is constructed and operated in a manner that adequately protects the health and safety of the citizens of Nye County, and its natural resources and environment, the County has no objection to issuance of a license to DOE for the proposed facility.”
Recent Political Developments

• Nevada Statewide Elected Officials are Unanimously Opposed to Yucca Mountain Repository
  – Political rhetoric always states concern for safety of Nevada citizens
  – Democrats and Republicans share same view in Nevada
  – Negligible safety impact, as estimated by a team of National Laboratories
  – Harry Reid, from Nevada, is Senate Majority Leader

• President Obama has Sided with Senator Reid
  – Opposition to Yucca Mountain appears to be absolute
  – Yucca Mountain science is a near blueprint of scientific integrity policy
  – In August 2008 directors of all 10 National Labs, including now Energy Secretary Chu (former director of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory), signed a letter supporting completion of Yucca Mountain

• Politics Appears to have Trumped Sound Science and Safety
Recent National Opinions Ignored in Nevada Press

- 3/8/2009, Washington Post – “By stripping funding for the nuclear repository at Nevada’s Yucca Mountain, President Obama has succeeded in killing the contentious project that remains unfinished 22 years after Congress selected the site. He compounds the error by not offering an alternative.”

- 3/11/2009, Chicago Tribune – “Reversing course from previous administrations satisfies critics in Nevada, including Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, but triggers another round of maneuvering and regional bickering in Congress.”

- 5/20/2009, New York Times – “But after the government has labored for more than two decades and spent almost $10 billion to get the site ready for licensing hearings, it would be foolish not to complete the process with a good-faith evaluation. Are Mr. Obama and Mr. Reid afraid of what science might tell them?”

Yucca Mountain Status and Future

- Over $30 billion put into the Nuclear Waste Fund
- Over $22 billion in fund today, after expenditures
- $8 billion from the waste fund and $2 billion tax dollars have been spent on Yucca Mountain
- Yucca Mountain was found suitable for a repository in 2002 when Congress overruled Nevada’s objections
- DOE submitted license application to NRC in June 2008
- 2010 budget calls for drastic cuts
- The President and Energy Secretary say there are better options than Yucca Mountain
Yucca Mountain Status and Future (cont)

- Another blue ribbon panel re: spent fuel disposal is promised – but will Yucca Mountain be an option?
- Without Yucca Mountain?
  - $30 billion in damages to nuclear utilities
  - High level radioactive waste at DOE sites has no where to go
- What is meant by “better options” since impacts at Yucca Mountain are negligible?
- State level opposition is likely to kill any new site selected since Nevada has provided the blueprint for opposition in the United States
- Local government support is not enough
- Safety, science, and sound Federal policy don’t seem to matter

What Can You Do?

- Demand that state-level elected officials not abandon Yucca Mountain and $10 billion already spent
  - Insist that regulatory processes that are in place be followed
  - This generation should deal with radioactive waste it created – not leave the problem for our children
- Actively participate in grass roots education
  - Volunteer to explain the benefits of nuclear energy to community organizations and in schools
  - Emphasize that nuclear energy is clean, addresses global warming issues, and provides energy independence
  - Encourage others to make sound energy policy an election day issue – particularly at State and National levels
  - Elect new leadership if they cannot or will not get this right
Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office (NWRPO) Website

- http://www.nyecounty.com/
- Documents discussed
- Links to other sites related to Yucca Mountain Repository