



Sustainable Fuel Cycle TASK FORCE

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Sustainable Fuel Cycle Task Force Science Panel

October 16, 2014

Secretary Ernest Moniz
Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Moniz,

As you know, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued their Yucca Mountain Post Closure Safety Evaluation Report that has independently concluded that the 2008 DOE License Application science meets all the stringent EPA and NRC regulatory safety and environmental protection requirements. This extensive NRC multi-decade half-billion dollars plus effort confirms the scientific safety analysis work of the Department of Energy team who spent approximately ten billion dollars on this unprecedented scientific site characterization and evaluation.

As scientists who have independently worked for many decades to support a sound approach for safely managing and disposing of our nation's used nuclear fuel and high level radioactive wastes, we urge you to move forward to complete the next Yucca Mountain licensing steps. This path of action is consistent with the law and is supported by the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit mandamus ruling. Specifically, you stated in your testimony before the House Energy and Commerce Committee on July 31, 2013 that DOE would abide by the legal rulings and NRC requirements. Therefore, DOE should now request additional funding to comply with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act and should utilize existing funding to restart the Yucca Mountain licensing process.

It is the collective view of our Panel that the need for progress to develop a geologic repository is more critical now than ever. Used nuclear fuel accumulations at both shutdown and operating reactors continues to grow imposing significant societal burdens; disposal of defense high level radioactive waste needs are not being met; and important legal contractual obligations and state agreements are not being achieved. In addition to restarting Yucca Mountain licensing, we note the need for urgent action expressed by the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on which you served. The BRC did not preclude continuing Yucca Mountain licensing and we believe continuing the Yucca Mountain licensing review is the most reasonable and prudent means to address this issue with a sense of urgency. We strongly believe that both the legally mandated Yucca Mountain licensing process should continue now and that pursuing the BRC recommendations should be added as a parallel enhancement. Thus we urge DOE to now be proactive and move forward rather than accept the politically motivated inactions of the past few years.

Yours sincerely for the Science Panel,

Charles Fairhurst, Ph.D.

D. Warner North Ph.D.

Ruth Weiner, Ph.D.

Isaac Winograd, Ph.D.

Wendell Weart, Ph.D.

Eugene H. Roseboom Jr., Ph.D.

Cc: John Holdren, Director, White House Office of Science & Technology Policy
Senator Landrieu, Chairman, Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
Senator Murkowski, Ranking Member, Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee



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Cc: continued

Congressman Upton, Chairman House Energy & Commerce Committee

Congressman Waxman, Ranking Member House Energy & Commerce Committee

Senator Feinstein, Chairman Senate Appropriations Energy & Water Subcommittee

Senator Alexander, Ranking Member Senate Appropriations Energy & Water Subcommittee

Congressman Simpson, Chairman House Appropriations Energy & Water Subcommittee

Congresswoman Kaptur, Ranking Member House Appropriations Energy & Water Subcommittee

Brent Scowcroft, Chairman Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future

Lee Hamilton, Vice Chairman, Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future