



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD**

2300 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1300
Arlington, VA 22201-3367

November 7, 2000

The Honorable Harry Reid
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

On behalf of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, I want to thank you for your critical support during consideration of the fiscal year 2001 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill. The \$2.9 million for the Board, which was included in the final bill, will enable the Board to continue its comprehensive review of the Department of Energy's (DOE) civilian radioactive waste management program. Cuts in the Board's technical staff would have adversely affected the timeliness, quality, and comprehensiveness of the Board's review.

As you know, for the last several years, the Board has focused its efforts on the DOE's preparations for upcoming repository program milestones, including a possible decision in 2001 on whether to recommend the Yucca Mountain site for repository development. The Board has strongly encouraged the DOE to quantify in a site recommendation the uncertainty that will inevitably be associated with estimates of repository performance. The Board believes that knowing the amount of uncertainty associated with these projections of performance will be important information for decision-makers. Other Board comments, including a recommendation first made by the Board in 1992 to evaluate alternative repository designs, have been intended to help the DOE reduce uncertainties.

Because the Board is completely independent and does not represent any special interest, our comments are sometimes not popular or politic. It is therefore vitally important that the Board receive the support of members of Congress who value an unbiased technical and scientific voice on these issues. We thank you for your continuing efforts to retain an independent and adequately funded Board. We also would like to acknowledge the courtesy and invaluable assistance extended to Board members and staff by your staff members, Kai Anderson and Drew Willison, throughout the appropriations process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jared L. Cohon".

Jared L. Cohon
Chairman