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External Affairs

## DOE Updates SG&G Panel on ESF Design, Construction, and Schedule

The Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board's Panel on Structural Geology & Geoengineering will hold a meeting on June 13-14, 1994, in Las Vegas, Nevada, to hear updates from the Department of Energy (DOE) and its management and operating (M&O) contractor on the design and schedule for excavating the underground exploratory studies facility (ESF) at Yucca Mountain. The panel also is interested in hearing how the administration's new funding proposal for the high-level waste management program (Scenario A) could affect the Yucca Mountain site characterization program. The meeting, which is open to the public, will be held in the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, 4255 South Paradise Road, Las Vegas, Nevada 89109; Tel (702) 369-4400; Fax (702) 369-3770. Presentations will run from 1:00-5:00 P.M. on Monday, June 13, and continue on Tuesday, June 14, from 8:00 A.M. to noon.

Specific topics that will be discussed at the meeting include (1) the current ESF design, (2) present efforts to simplify the current design, and (3) potential ways to reduce the excavation schedule and costs. Board members have asked for a presentation on how Scenario A potentially could specifically affect the schedule for testing, site-suitability issues, and the key assumptions being used for the repository advanced conceptual design. How to most efficiently use the tunnel boring machine during excavation of the five-mile portal-to-portal loop also will be discussed. This is the first detailed briefing on construction of the underground ESF since publication of the Board's October 1993 report, *Underground Exploration and Testing at Yucca Mountain*, in which the Board made a number of detailed technical recommendations on how to achieve a more timely, cost-effective schedule for excavation of the ESF and for reinitiating important in-situ testing at the site.

The NWTRB was created by Congress in the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1987 to evaluate the technical and scientific validity of activities undertaken by the DOE in its program to manage the disposal of the nation's spent nuclear fuel and defense high-level waste. Transcripts of the meeting will be available on computer disk or on a library-loan basis in paper format from Victoria Reich, Board librarian, beginning July 26, 1994. For further information or for copies of any of the Board's reports, contact Frank Randall, External Affairs, Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, 1100 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 910, Arlington, Virginia 22209; 703-235-4473.