



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD
1100 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 910
Arlington, VA 22209

November 5, 1993

The Honorable Hazel R. O'Leary
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Madame Secretary:

On behalf of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, I would like to thank you for inviting the Board to designate someone to serve on an intermediary panel to oversee a financial and management review of the Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Project

As you know, the Board's charge in the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1987 is to provide a completely independent evaluation of the technical and scientific validity of activities undertaken by the Secretary related to civilian radioactive waste management. We feel it is absolutely vital to the Board's continued effectiveness in fulfilling its mandate to avoid any appearance of becoming part of the activities Congress created it to review. Therefore, after extensive discussion of this matter, the Board feels it must respectfully decline to designate an appointee to the intermediary panel

Nevertheless, we very much agree with the need for an independent financial and management review of the project. In fact, in its October 1993 report on underground exploration and testing at the Yucca Mountain site, the Board identified several issues that should be addressed as part of such a project review. It is our understanding that the DOE is now considering using a contractor with no connection to the Department to conduct this review. The Board strongly supports this approach. Using a truly independent contractor will enhance the intrinsic credibility of the evaluation. We will address the results of this review as part of our ongoing evaluation of the technical and scientific aspects of the program.

The Board remains convinced that a review of the management and organizational structure of the *entire* Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, as called for in the Board's March 1993 *Special Report*, is essential. We strongly concur with the views expressed by Representatives Philip Sharp and Richard Lehman in their letter to you dated August 5, 1993. Namely, that any review must take a "comprehensive look at the issues that have been raised regarding this DOE program." The scope of the

issues should cover concerns about "unrealistic deadlines, the lack of an integrated plan, and the need for improved program management...." We also agree that the review must be truly independent of the DOE and that a financial and management review of the project should not be a substitute for the more broadly based review of OCRWM's management and organizational structure. Furthermore, we believe that this, or any other, independent review can and should be conducted without slowing the momentum of site-characterization activities currently under way at the Yucca Mountain site.

The Board commends the Secretary for initiating a financial and management review of the Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Project and appreciates having the opportunity to provide its perspective on the review process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John E. Cantlon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "C".

John E. Cantlon
Chairman