

# **Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board**

**Panel on Technical Experience Gained from  
Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level  
Radioactive Waste Management Efforts, to  
Date.**

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# History Lesson/OCRWM 101

- **Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM) – created by Public Law 97-425 (as amended, 1/7/1983)**
- **Terminated by Obama Administration? 9/30/2010**
- **Evaluated numerous sites for a Geologic Repository for Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Waste; Nominated five repository sites to President Reagan for further site characterization (1984); three sites approved by the President (1986); directed by Congress to characterize only Yucca Mountain (1987); Site Recommendation (February 2002); License Application (June 2008)**
- **Evaluated numerous sites for Monitored Retrievable Storage (MRS) (Interim Storage); Submitted a proposal to Congress for MRS development (1986); Proposal was rejected but facility was authorized with conditions (1987)**

# Major Program Challenges

- **Controversial nature of activities (radioactive waste fear factor, extraordinary timeframe requirements, siting, transportation, communication, trust and confidence)**
- **First-of-a-kind nature of many activities**
- **Political intervention**
- **Changing leadership**
- **Federal bureaucracy**
- **Funding**

# **Applicable Technical Advances**

**Some advances were geologic media-specific:**

- **Dry drilling technology**
- **TBM cutters were developed for tuff**

**Non media-specific advances:**

- **Long-term criticality (burn-up credit)**
- **Total System Performance Assessment**
- **Scientific methods (Quality Assurance)**
- **Design work for spent fuel handling**
- **Spent fuel storage research/demonstrations**

## **Needed Research/Development**

- **Generic research on potential repository geologic media probably not useful**
- **Research on long-term storage of higher burn-up fuels could be useful**
- **Development of a easily accessible comprehensive, detailed history of OCRWM and Yucca Mountain could be useful**
- **Development of an easily accessible library of past scientific and technical reports could be useful**

# **Management Approaches/Changes**

- **Lead Laboratory concept**
- **Maintain relatively small core program staff**
- **Remove the Program from the Federal Bureaucracy**
- **Program funding must be accessible and timely**
- **Leadership stability**

# **Actions for Building Trust and Confidence**

- **Program transparency**
- **Program should be insulated from political intervention (budget process/DTD Ops)**
  - **Congress should approve facility siting**
- **Congress should be able to intervene only through enacted legislation**
- **Stable program leadership**

## **Other Thoughts**

- **In the near term, the Courts will determine the next steps...**
- **Is the Nation serious about this issue?**
- **Comprehensive legislation takes at least three years to develop, if...**
- **Federal liability will need to be addressed in any new policy path**

## **Concluding Thoughts**

- **“...logic clearly dictates that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or the one.” (Mr. Spock)**
- **“Those that fail to learn from history, are doomed to repeat it.” (Winston Churchill)**
- **The Program did not fail**
- **Politics failed the Nation**