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For Immediate Release

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External Affairs

Winter Meeting Includes OCRWM Budget Priorities, Scientific Progress at Yucca Mountain, and Defense Waste Issues

The Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board has scheduled its winter meeting for January 10-11, 1996, in Las Vegas, Nevada. The meeting, which is open to the public, will be held at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, 4255 South Paradise Road, Las Vegas, Nevada 89109; (Tel) 702-369-4400; (Fax) 702-369-3770. The meeting will begin at 8:30 A.M. on both days and will concentrate on updates from the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM) and on issues related to site suitability.

On Wednesday, January 10, scheduled presentations will provide updates from the OCRWM. Topics to be covered include fiscal year 1996 budget priorities; results of underground exploration and testing and associated surface-based drilling; use of testing and exploration results to further program objectives; and a review of *in situ* thermal testing facilities design, objectives, and timelines. The Board also has invited representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to speak on each agency's plans for addressing the National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) recommendations on the environmental standard for Yucca Mountain, Nevada. The day will conclude with reports from representatives of the British and Chinese waste management programs.

On Thursday, January 11, the meeting will focus on several different issues. The Board will spend most of the morning exploring the use of expert judgment. In addition to hearing generic positions from the DOE, the NRC, and the state of Nevada, the Board will hear about specific studies: a DOE-sponsored elicitation on volcanic hazards, an NRC-sponsored elicitation on future climate, and the use of expert judgment in the 1995 iteration of total system performance assessment (TSPA-95). The Board also will hear comments from the NAS on its review of the DOE's technical basis report on surface processes. The day will end with a look at the DOE's plans for disposing of DOE-owned spent nuclear fuel, high-level waste from reprocessing, and surplus fissile materials, primarily plutonium.

As usual, time will be provided for public comment and questions. To ensure that everyone wishing to speak is provided time to do so, the Board encourages those who have comments to sign the *Public Comment Register*, which will be located at the sign-in table. While a speaking time limit may have to be set, written comments of any length may be submitted for the record.

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The Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board 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. In that same legislation, Congress directed the DOE to characterize a site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, for its suitability as a potential location for a permanent repository for the disposal of that waste.

Transcripts of the meeting will be available on computer disk or on a library-loan basis in paper format from Davonya Barnes, Board staff, beginning February 26, 1996. For further information, contact Frank Randall, External Affairs, 1100 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 910, Arlington, Virginia 22209; (Tel) 703-235-4473; (Fax) 703-235-4495.

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