



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD
2300 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1300
Arlington, VA 22201

December 18, 1998
For Immediate Release

Paula N. Alford
External Affairs

Board to Focus on DOE's Viability Assessment; Panel to Discuss Repository Design Process

On January 25, 1999, members of the Panel on the Repository, Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board (Board), will meet to discuss the process for evaluating alternative repository designs and selecting license application designs (LADS). The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) developed LADS as a basis for the selection of a preferred repository design for the potential site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada.

On Tuesday, January 26, and Wednesday, January 27, the members of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board (Board) will hold a full board meeting to review the DOE's viability assessment (VA). The Board also will be briefed on the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's draft proposed rule (10 CFR 63) for disposal of high-level waste at a potential repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada.

The meetings will be held at the Alexis Park Hotel, 375 East Harmon, in Las Vegas, Nevada 89109; (Tel) 702-796-3300, 800-453-8000; (Fax) 702-796-0766. The panel meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m. on January 25. The full Board meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. on January 26 and at 8:00 a.m. on January 27. The meetings are open to the public.

During the January 25 morning panel meeting, the panel will be briefed on the LADS selection process, selection criteria, and identification and evaluation of design alternatives and features. In the afternoon, the panel will review the selected design alternatives, the basis for their selection, and the process and schedule leading to the identification of a single preferred repository design.

On January 26 at the full Board meeting, the Board will hear presentations on the scientific and engineering investigations at Yucca Mountain and the regulatory criteria pertinent to a potential repository at Yucca Mountain. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has been invited to send a representative to discuss the NRC's draft proposed rule (10 CFR Part 63) for disposing of high-level waste at a potential repository at Yucca Mountain. On January 27,

the focus of the meeting will turn to the DOE's VA. Representatives from the DOE will make presentations on different aspects of the VA, including repository design, waste package characteristics, total system performance assessment, the license application plan, and repository life-cycle costs.

The Board is taking extra effort during the full Board meeting on January 26 and 27 to accommodate the views of interested parties. Time will be set aside at the end of both days, and will be extended if necessary, to take public comments. Those wishing to speak are encouraged to sign the "Public Comment Register" at the check-in table. A time limit may have to be set on individual remarks, but written comments of any length may be submitted for the record. In addition, time will be set aside for public comment in the late morning of January 27. Interested parties also will have the opportunity to submit questions in writing to the Board. To the extent time permits, these questions will be answered by one or more Board members during the meeting. The Board members also are extending an invitation to the public to come meet Board members and have a cup of coffee. This informal get-together will be held from 7:15 to 7:45 a.m. on January 27 in the meeting room.

A detailed agenda for both meetings will be available approximately one week before the meeting. You can either call for a copy or visit the Board's Web site at www.nwtrb.gov. Transcripts of this meeting will be available via e-mail, on computer disk, or on a library-loan basis in paper format from Davonya Barnes, Board staff, beginning on February 23, 1999. For further information, contact the NWTRB, Paula Alford, External Affairs at 2300 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1300, Arlington, Virginia 22201-3367; (tel) 703-235-4473; (fax) 703-235-4495; (e-mail) info@nwtrb.gov.

The Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board was created by Congress in the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1987. Its purpose is to evaluate the technical and scientific validity of activities undertaken by the DOE in its program for managing the disposal of the nation's commercial spent nuclear fuel and defense high-level waste. In the same legislation, Congress directed the DOE to characterize a site at Yucca Mountain in Nevada for its suitability as a potential repository for the permanent disposal of the waste.
