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**U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Commerce**
Room 2125, Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6115

February 19, 1999

Dr. Jared Cohon
Chairman
Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board
2300 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 1300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Dr. Cohon:

On February 10, 1999, you presented your views on H.R. 45, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1999 before the Energy and Power Subcommittee. On behalf of the members of the Subcommittee, I thank you for your informative testimony.

Attached is a list of additional questions for you to answer on this subject. Your responses will be entered into the record in the same manner as your original testimony. Your responses would be appreciated on or before March 1, 1999. If you have any questions, please call Kevin Cook at (202) 225-2927.

Thank you for your continued attention and assistance to the matter.

Sincerely,



Joe Barton
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Power

Attachment

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND POWER
FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS TO DR. JARED COHON
H.R. 45, NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT OF 1999

1. In your schedule, you indicate there are many uncertainties that need to be resolved about the performance of the repository. Does the schedule in the current DOE Program Plan, dated July 1998, provide sufficient time to resolve these uncertainties and for the Board to complete its technical review function?
2. Is the TRB prepared to fulfill that same role on the accelerated timeline for an interim storage facility as proposed in H.R. 45?
3. Does the Board have sufficient funds in the President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2000 to carry out its Congressional mandate to review the validity of the technical and scientific activities of the Department of Energy with respect to the permanent repository?
4. Does the Board have sufficient resources to conduct the additional review entailed by the interim storage site as proposed in H.R. 45?
5. How do the recent earthquakes in the vicinity of Yucca Mountain affect your assessment of the Yucca Mountain site?
6. How does the recent discovery of relatively rapid migration of radioactive materials from the Nevada Test Site affect your assessment of the long-term safety of the Yucca Mountain site?
7. From your review of the DOE work to date and from your own knowledge of the Yucca Mountain site, do you see any technical reason why a permanent repository could not be built safely at the Yucca Mountain site? Is there any technical reason why an interim storage site, such as proposed in H.R. 45, could not be built at Yucca Mountain?