



January 23, 2017

Dear Governor Perry,

On behalf of the Sustainable Fuel Cycle Task Force (SFCTF) Science Panel, we congratulate you upon your nomination to become Secretary of Energy. While there are many challenges facing the Department of Energy (DOE), we request that you make one of your highest priorities the restarting of the Yucca Mountain Project and putting our Nation's stalled nuclear waste management system back on track.

We are scientists who have worked for decades to provide a scientifically sound approach for safely managing and disposing of used nuclear fuel and high level radioactive wastes. It is our opinion, that the science behind Yucca Mountain was conducted to the highest standards, has withstood countless peer reviews, and is sound. We urge you to lead the DOE to follow the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA) to:

- Re-establish the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management consistent with the NWPA
- Complete the Yucca Mountain licensing process,
- Reach out to create a mutually beneficial partnership agreement with the Nevada hosts,
- Work toward further long term legislative enhancements to the NWPA, e.g. improved governance, consolidated storage, and funding structures.

After decades of study by eight of our National Laboratories in conjunction with numerous universities, the U.S. Geological Survey, and scores of independent researchers at a cost of more than ten billion dollars, both DOE and Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) scientists have concluded that Yucca Mountain meets all protective safety and environmental protection regulations. In 2002 both Houses of Congress and the President signed into law the selection of the site overriding the State of Nevada's disapproval. As the NRC licensing is almost complete, it is now imperative that the NRC and DOE complete the licensing process to determine if the site is worthy of receiving a Construction Authorization. As is already provided for in our national regulatory process, the State of Nevada and other intervenor's concerns should be fairly resolved in an open and transparent manner before impartial NRC judges. This process should be allowed to resume and continue to its conclusion without political interference. Over the past eight years, politics have been used to run roughshod over science, and it is now time to put science and the interests of our nation ahead of personal political agendas.

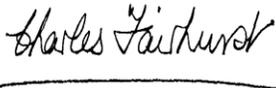
We recommend that DOE, in parallel with the Yucca Mountain licensing, initiate a discussion with the State of Nevada to try to fashion an agreement in a manner similar to that already established with the Nevada Nye County host.

We recommend that DOE continue projects to enable it to complete their contractual responsibilities to remove spent fuel from reactors to minimize ever-growing taxpayer liabilities. Safe prompt removal of spent fuel from our growing number of permanently closed reactor sites should be a priority. An improved integrated nuclear waste program should consider the addition of redundant and diverse concepts such as private interim storage facilities and advanced transportation approaches.

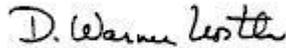
It is the collective view of our Panel that it is essential that we move forward with implementing our national repository program and leave our country a better place for future generations. Saddling our children and grandchildren with spent nuclear fuel in dozens of temporary storage locations across the country adjacent to our rivers, lakes, and seashores along with seemingly endless financial liabilities for engineered storage is not what they deserve from us. We need to act and the time is now.

We thank you in advance for your leadership in this important and critical area.

Yours sincerely for the Science Panel,



Charles Fairhurst, Ph.D.



D. Warner North Ph.D.



Ruth Weiner, Ph.D.



Isaac Winograd, Ph.D.



Wendell Weart, Ph.D.