The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

January 10, 2002

The Honorable Kenny Guinn
Governor of Nevada
Capitol Building
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Governor Guinn:

This letter is to notify you, in accordance with section 114(a)(1) of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, of my intention to recommend to the President approval of the Yucca Mountain site for the development of a nuclear waste repository. In accordance with the requirements of the Act, I will be submitting my recommendation to the President no sooner than 30 days from this date. At that time, as the Act also requires, I will be submitting to the President a comprehensive statement of the basis for that recommendation.

First, and most important, that recommendation will include the basis for and documentation supporting my belief that the science behind this project is sound and that the site is technically suitable for this purpose.

Second, there are compelling national interests that require us to complete the siting process and move forward with the development of a repository, as Congress mandated almost 20 years ago. In brief, the reasons are these.

- A repository is important to our national security. We must advance our non-proliferation goals by providing a secure place to dispose of any spent fuel and other waste products that result from decommissioning unneeded nuclear weapons, and ensure the effective operations of our nuclear navy by providing a secure place to dispose of its spent nuclear fuel.

- A repository is important to the secure disposal of nuclear waste. Spent nuclear fuel, high level radioactive waste, and excess plutonium for which there is no complete disposal pathway without a repository are currently stored at over 131 sites in 39 States. We should consolidate the nuclear wastes to enhance protection against terrorists attacks by moving them to one underground location that is far from population centers.

- A repository is important to our energy security. We must ensure that nuclear power, which provides 20% of the nation's electric power, remains an important part of our domestic energy production.

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- And a repository is important to our efforts to protect the environment. We must clean up our defense waste sites permanently and safely dispose of other high level nuclear waste.

As I indicated earlier, pursuant to section 114(a) of the NWPA, I will be submitting my recommendation to the President no earlier than 30 days from today, together with the other documentation the statute requires. I will provide you with a copy of those materials at that time.

Sincerely,

Spencer Abraham

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