

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF CIVILIAN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT**

**NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD
FULL BOARD MEETING**

**SUBJECT: THE PROCESS FOR DETERMINING
SITE SUITABILITY**

PRESENTER: DR. JANE SUMMERSON

**PRESENTER'S TITLE
AND ORGANIZATION: SITE SUITABILITY TEAM LEADER
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

**PRESENTER'S
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Outline

- **DOE's Siting Guidelines**
- **Process Overview**
 - **Technical basis**
 - **Peer review**
 - **Guideline compliance assessment**
 - **Higher-level findings**
 - **Technical site suitability**
 - **Overall suitability**
 - **Site recommendation**

DOE's Siting Guidelines

- **Range of options considered concerning application of the guidelines**
- **Public comments solicited on application of the guidelines**
- **No clear consensus reflected in public comments**

DOE's Siting Guidelines

(CONTINUED)

**DOE concluded that no compelling justification exists
for rulemaking**



Process Overview

Process Overview

Characteristics of the process

- **Open and sequential**
- **Evaluation of individual guideline conditions or groups of guideline conditions as the relevant data, analyses and facility designs become available**
- **Predecisional public involvement at key points in the evaluation sequence**
- **Provides timely information and analyses for DOE management decisions**
- **Documents evidence and rationale for DOE decisions**
- **Clear separation between technical information and an assessment of adequacy to support DOE decisions**



Technical Basis

Technical Basis Documentation

Technical basis reports will

- **Discuss the available data and analyses**
- **Present a current understanding of the subject area, including evaluations of:**
 - **uncertainties**
 - **credible alternative models or interpretations permitted by the data**
 - **bounds on conditions and processes consistent with the current understanding**
- **Contain Executive Summary written for the layperson**
- **Each be peer reviewed by National Academy of Sciences (NAS)**



Peer Review

Selecting The Peer Review Panel

The peer reviewers will be selected considering:

- **Minimum qualifications**
- **Nominations from the public**

Peer Review Panel

Management of the peer review will provide opportunity for public observation of formal interactions between peer reviewers and authors

Peer Review Panel

(CONTINUED)

Reviews will focus on evaluating the validity of the data and interpretations and the adequacy of the treatment given to technical uncertainties in describing the current state of understanding



Guideline Compliance Assessment

Development of the Guideline Compliance Assessment

(CONTINUED)

- **Draft guideline compliance assessments will be written based upon**
 - **Technical basis**
 - **External review of the technical basis**

External Review of the Guideline Compliance Assessment

- **DOE will publish a Federal Register Notice of the draft guideline compliance assessment, technical basis and peer review availability for public review and comment**
- **DOE will hold public workshops on the guideline assessments during the public comment period to:**
 - **Provide an open forum to discuss the technical basis and the draft guideline compliance assessments**



Higher-Level Findings

Higher-Level Findings

(CONTINUED)

A favorable higher-level finding requires a judgement that no new information is likely to change the conclusion, however

- **DOE recognizes that after a decision, it is conceivable that new information could require a reassessment of the body of evidence used to support a higher-level finding.**
- **Such information should be brought to the attention of the Director as soon as possible so that DOE can take appropriate steps.**

Overall Suitability

- **The OCRWM Director will make a decision on overall site suitability based on the technical site suitability evaluation and higher-level findings on environmental quality, transportation, and socioeconomic guidelines**
- **If, at any time, the site is found to be unsuitable, an alternative plan will be submitted to Congress within six months of the unsuitability declaration**