



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

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For Immediate Release

Karyn D. Severson
External Affairs

Uncertainty and Yucca Mountain Safety Strategy Are Focus of January 2000 NWTRB Meeting

On Tuesday, January 25, and Wednesday, January 26, 2000, the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board (Board) will meet in Las Vegas, Nevada, to discuss the sources and types of technical and scientific uncertainty associated with an assessment of the performance of a potential Yucca Mountain repository and the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) proposed safety strategy for such a repository. The Board also will be briefed by the DOE on the status of scientific and technical studies being conducted in connection with the characterization of the Yucca Mountain site. The DOE is evaluating the Yucca Mountain site, located about 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, to determine its suitability as the location of a repository for the permanent disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.

The meeting will be held at the Alexis Park Hotel, 375 East Harmon Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada 89109. The telephone numbers for the Alexis Park are (702) 796-3300 and (800) 453-8000. The meeting sessions will begin at 8:30 a.m. on both days.

On the morning of January 25, the DOE will update the Board on events that have taken place recently within the civilian radioactive waste management program and the Yucca Mountain project. The meeting then will turn to the topic of "addressing uncertainty," with presentations on the role of uncertainty in complex analyses, decision-making under uncertainty, addressing uncertainty in licensing a Yucca Mountain repository, and how uncertainty will be addressed and communicated in a decision about whether to recommend Yucca Mountain for development as a repository. Presentations on these topics will be made throughout the day and will be followed by a panel discussion of the presentation topics.

The morning session on Wednesday, January 26, will focus on the DOE's safety strategy for a possible Yucca Mountain repository, including a discussion of the "principal factors" that have been identified by the DOE as being the most important to repository performance. Two of the factors, seepage and drip shield design, will be looked at in some detail in an effort to understand the process for identifying and establishing priorities for the various factors. Later in

the morning and throughout the rest of the day, the DOE will update the Board on the status of scientific studies being conducted in connection with the characterization of the Yucca Mountain site, including chlorine-36 studies, fluid inclusion work, and studies at Busted Butte.

The two-day meeting will be open to the public. Time for public comment will be set aside on both days. Those wanting to speak are encouraged to sign the "Public Comment Register" at the check-in table. Depending on the number of requests, a time limit may be set on oral statements; written comments may be submitted for inclusion in the record of the meeting. Interested parties also may submit written questions to the Board. As time permits, written questions will be answered during the sessions.

A detailed agenda will be available approximately one week before the meeting. Copies of the agenda can be requested by telephone or obtained from the Board's Web site at www.nwtrb.gov. Transcripts of the meeting will be available on the Board's Web site, via e-mail, on computer disk, and on a library-loan basis in paper format from Davonya Barnes of the Board staff, beginning on February 21, 2000. For further information on the meeting, contact Karyn Severson, External Affairs, NWTRB, at 2300 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1300, Arlington, Virginia 22201-3367; (tel) 703-235-4473; (fax) 703-235-4495; (e-mail) info@nwtrb.gov.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Alexis Park Hotel. Individuals wanting to reserve one of those rooms must do so by January 3, 2000. To receive the preferred rate, please state that you are attending the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board meeting.

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 Secretary of Energy related to managing the disposal of the nation's spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. In the same legislation, Congress directed the DOE to characterize a site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, to determine its suitability as the location of a potential repository for the permanent disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.
