

January 22, 2001

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve  
Commissioner Dicus  
Commissioner Diaz  
Commissioner McGaffigan  
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: Dennis K. Rathbun, Director **/s/ RA**  
Office of Congressional Affairs

SUBJECT: SECRETARY OF ENERGY

On Saturday, January 20, 2001, the Senate confirmed Spencer Abraham as Secretary of Energy. The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held his confirmation hearing on January 18; OCA has a transcript of the hearing.

In his testimony before the Committee, former Senator Abraham said he shared then President-elect Bush's commitment to ensuring that sound science governs the nuclear waste program. He said that he shared the frustration of the Members of the Committee with the lack of progress in this area. He added that his commitment is to make progress on the nuclear waste program while ensuring that sound science governs decisions on site recommendation. During questioning, he mentioned NRC's role in the process.

At numerous times during the confirmation hearing, there was discussion of, and support for, the role of nuclear power in the Nation's energy mix.

cc: EDO  
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