

RAS 4444

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May 11, 2002

ATOMIC SAFETY LICENSING BOARD
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
Washington D.C. 20555-0001

DOCKETED
USNRC

May 20, 2002 (9:03AM)

OFFICE OF SECRETARY
RULEMAKINGS AND
ADJUDICATIONS STAFF

Dear Sir:

SERVED MAY 20, 2002

WE PROPOSE that storage of spent nuclear fuel (SNF) at the proposed Pigeon Spur Fuel Bank 12 miles east of the Utah-Nevada border and 45 miles south of the Utah-Idaho border in Box Elder County, Utah, may be a better solution. This spot is 25 miles from closest recorded seismic activity in a region classified as seismic zone 2. Pigeon is in a more remote area where in 5,000 sq miles the 150 people living there overwhelmingly want and need the project and its work. Of the three projects (Yucca Mountain, Private Fuel Storage, and Pigeon Spur Fuel Bank) only Pigeon is on an existing railroad.

Today the President wants reprocessing of SNF considered. He also wants to reduce costs. If reprocessing is eventually done, SNF should be stored now where it is most easily and economically accessible, and that must be at a RR spur. Also, for the first fifty years of dry storage after five years of pool water storage, SNF storage can be done with simple convection air cooling at a ground surface facility. First storage deep underground at Yucca Mountain requires 10,000 HP of continuous air pumping. Storing of SNF at Pigeon and PFS saves more than \$5 million per year just for energy for 50 years, plus the cost of cooling equipment and extra drift tunnels at Yucca Mountain, over time, in total, much more than a billion dollars. They also enable classifying and direct access to every SNF canister for best staging of SNF for reprocessing which cannot be done at YM where canisters are stored in series, one behind another, in long tunnels, and cannot be easily sorted.

Today's projections require storage for 77,000 tons of SNF. This would require the capacities of both Pigeon and PFS. Both Pigeon and PFS should be licensed as soon as possible to resolve the SNF issue.

Sincerely yours,

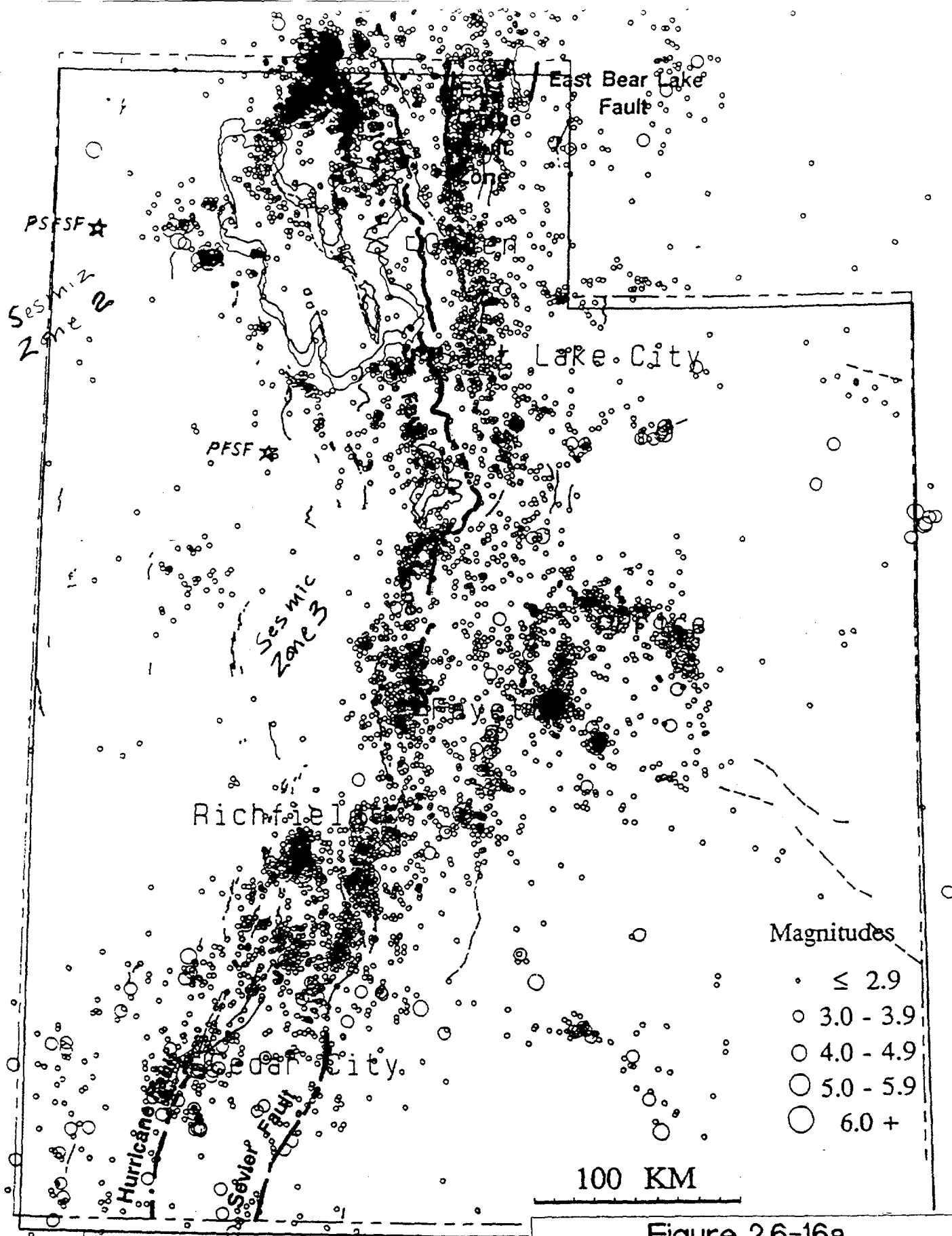


William D. (Bill) Peterson, M.S., P.E.
P&A Engineers, Pigeon Spur Fuel Bank

enc: map of region seismic activity
Deseret News 5/8/02 "Research sought on reducing N-waste"
cc: Andrew Card, White House Chief of Staff
Spencer Abraham, Secretary of Energy

Template = SECY-043

SECY-02



Seismicity of Utah. Each circle represents one earthquake located by the University of Utah Seismograph Stations from Figure 9. July, 1962 through December, 1989 (over 11,000 earthquakes).
 Figure 12. Generalized map of Quaternary faults in Utah, (University of Utah Seismograph Stations). Quaternary = during the last 1.6 million years.

Figure 2.6-16a
**QUATERNARY STRUCTURES
 AND SEISMICITY**
Pigeon Spur Fuel Storage Facility
SAFETY ANALYSIS REPORT

Research sought on reducing N-waste

But White House is still seeking OK for Yucca Mountain

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration plans to ask Congress to expand long-term research into reducing the amount of nuclear waste produced by the U.S. nuclear energy industry and reduce the cost of disposal, the Energy Department said Tuesday.

Energy Undersecretary Robert Card said there is for now "a riveting focus" on getting approval for a waste disposal site at Yucca Mountain in Nevada. But he added, "We should be looking at science and technology that would reduce the cost."

President Bush's decision in February to go ahead with the Yucca Mountain facility 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas was to face its first congressional test Wednesday. The House is expected to vote to override Nevada's veto of the president's decision.

The Senate will take up the matter this summer and is beginning the process with a series of committee hearings this month.

Anticipating congressional rejection of the veto, which would allow implementation of the Yucca Mountain disposal plan, Card said the department's focus for now is on getting a license application ready for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission by 2004. Assuming the license is approved, the disposal facility is expected to open in 2010.

Card also said the administration will ask Congress for "tens of millions of dollars" on broader long-term scientific research into ways to reduce the volume of nuclear waste, including research into technologies such as transmutation and waste reprocessing.

"The administration is on record as being willing to reopen the reprocessing issue," Card told members of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, an advisory panel created by Congress.

The United States remains opposed to reprocessing used nuclear fuel because of the risk of nonproliferation. Last year, Vice President Dick Cheney's energy task force recommended continued research into reprocessing technology.

Transmutation is an emerging technology that reduces the number of long-lived isotopes in nuclear waste, but no one has yet to perfect it, and it is widely believed to be too expensive to pursue now. Reprocessing or transmutation would reduce the amount of waste, but not all of it, so a disposal site still would be needed, Card said.

He and other Energy Department officials expressed confidence that Yucca Mountain would be approved not only by Congress but by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which must issue construction and operating licenses.

The DOE officials made clear in remarks to the advisory board Tuesday that they expected many of the remaining technical uncertainties, including the specific design of the Yucca facility, to remain flexible well into the licensing process and, in some cases, beyond that.

For example, final decisions have not been made whether to pursue a "hot" design, in which wastes would be kept closer together, or a cooler design with wastes would more spread-out.

The advisory board has urged for some time adoption of a cooler design, arguing it would remove some uncertainties over the durability over thousands of years of the engineered waste package.

Card said Tuesday the department would keep both options open, although he favors a "hot" design.

Addressing another contentious issue, Card said he is confident a system will be developed for transporting the wastes to Yucca Mountain that is satisfactory to the states through which the waste would pass. Opponents of the Nevada site have argued it is too risky and dangerous to have thousands of nuclear waste shipments crossing the country on highways and by rail.

DOE officials said the department leans heavily toward primarily rail transport, although completion of a final transportation plan is not expected until next year.

"We want to jump-start the transportation issue," Margaret Chu, the new director of DOE's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, which oversees the nuclear waste disposal issue, told the advisory panel.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of)

PRIVATE FUEL STORAGE, L.L.C.)

(Independent Spent Fuel Storage
Installation))

Docket No. 72-22-ISFSI

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing LETTER DATED MAY 11, 2002 FROM WILLIAM D. PETERSON TO ASLBP have been served upon the following persons by deposit in the U.S. mail, first class, or through NRC internal distribution.

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Docket No. 72-22-ISFSI
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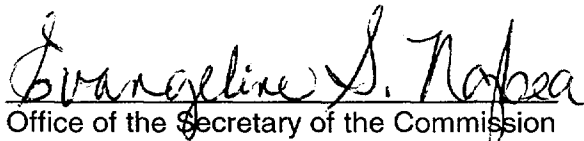
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Office of the Secretary of the Commission

Dated at Rockville, Maryland,
this 20th day of May 2002