



STATE OF UTAH

SCOTT M. MATHESON
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SALT LAKE CITY

84114

June 29, 1982

Mr. Nunzio J. Pallidino, Chairman
United States Nuclear Regulatory
Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Chairman Pallidino:

As you are aware, the state of Utah is currently under consideration for the siting of a nuclear waste repository. The Gibson Dome site in the Paradox Basin is a bedded salt site which is located less than a mile from the boundary of the Canyonlands National Park and eleven miles from the Colorado River. It is an extraordinarily complex terrain as well as one of great scenic value. Needless to say, the public opposition to continued DOE activities in the area has been resounding.

It has recently come to my attention that the DOE has engaged in informal negotiations with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to allow relaxation of the 10 C.F.R. 60 regulations. Specifically, I have learned that DOE has requested the NRC to relax or modify the requirement that three sites be fully characterized prior to selection of the final site for a repository; that the requirement for an exploratory shaft in salt be eliminated (or a decision made at this point not to require an exploratory shaft in salt); and that authorization be granted to begin construction of a repository prior to completion of licensing procedures. It is my understanding the pre-licensing work authorization is being requested for 1985 with construction to begin in 1986.

Inasmuch as the preliminary engineering work is completed on the Utah Gibson Dome site, and a model of a repository, with attendant rail, power, and water access routes through the complex geographic terrain is available for public review, I have considerable concern that any informal

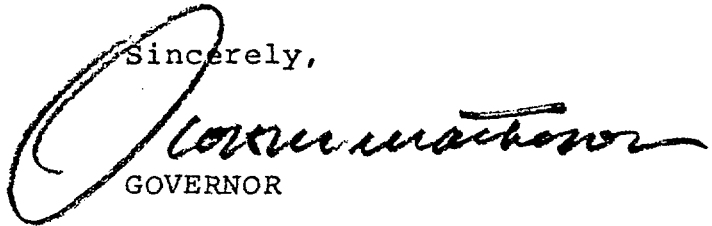
Mr. Nunzio J. Palladino
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negotiations between the DOE and NRC may have significant implications for the state of Utah.

I therefore request a verification as to the occurrence of the above alleged informal negotiations and the accuracy of the information I have received. I also wish to be kept fully apprised of any and all discussions between the DOE and the NRC regarding the siting and licensing of a repository in salt, informal, or otherwise.

The role of a state in monitoring the DOE siting activities is becoming increasingly difficult as the decision making process is accelerated. It is imperative that this decision making take place in a manner which will allow careful scrutiny by the impacted states and public. I appreciate your response to this request.

Sincerely,



GOVERNOR

SMM:jc



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7/2..To EDO to Prepare Response for Signature of Chairman and Comm Review
Date due Comm: July 19...Cpys to: RF....82-0694 (Note: if response will be
delayed for more than 10 working days, please ack by phone or in writing)

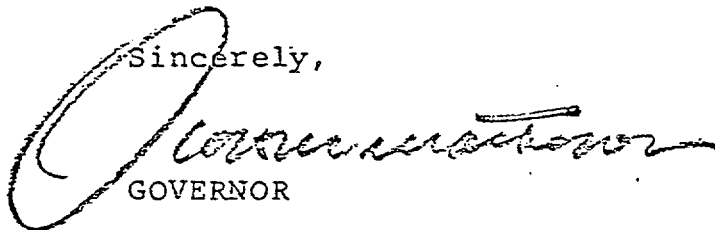
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