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Consideration of Environmental Impacts on Temporary Storage of Spent Fuel After Cessation of Reactor Operation

Comment On: NRC-2012-0246-0361

Waste Confidence - Continued Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel

Document: NRC-2012-0246-DRAFT-1253

Comment on FR Doc # 2013-21708

Submitter Information

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General Comment

The NRC has never adequately addressed the question of nuclear waste storage. Dry casks are acceptable for the very short term, but there's been no viable plan for long-term storage. Vitrification only lasts 100 years in most cases and when it breaks down all the waste will pool together and perhaps achieve criticality. As well, the proposed site of Yucca Mtn. is inadequate, as the mountain is 10% salt water and would erode any metallic housing for waste modules, among many other reasons.

The recently proposed "temporary" waste storage sites will become permanent, once the waste is sited there; no one will have the political leverage to get it moving again, once all the construction and transportation contracts are fulfilled. As for transportation, high-level radioactive waste will be regularly trucked over our nation's highways, subject to any number of catastrophic accidents daily, one of which could render a large portion of a state (or states) uninhabitable for the foreseeable future.

There needs to be a national discussion on the subject of waste, that addresses the true costs of storing materials that remain highly radioactive, in the case of U-238 for 4.5 billion years, and in the case of Pu-239 for 24,000 years; but that's just the half-life. The true period of storage should be 10 times longer, in truth many times longer than the earth is likely to exist.

We simply don't have any real plan for storage and we have to admit that. We have to admit that the best possible plan, which would still fall far short of what is needed for public safety, would be exorbitantly expensive, possibly enough to damage our economy for the long term. And yet anything less than our utmost effort and expense will turn out to be a disaster, slowly unfolding. We can't leave it to future generations, for the rest of the lifespan of the earth, to pay for our power generation for a paltry 40 years. We need to face the truth and determine what is necessary to protect future generations no matter what the cost.

And we need to stop making more waste, now. It is unconscionable to continue operation nuclear reactors, producers of such highly-lethal material, when there are other alternatives for creating energy. Localizing energy production will eliminate 40% of the need (lost in transmission) at one stroke. We can't continue to protect an industry that does nothing to protect us.