



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

October 11, 1996

PDR  
per D. Mossburg

The Honorable Frank H. Murkowski, Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

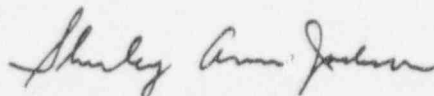
Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am responding to your September 19, 1996 letter on the Ward Valley low-level waste facility. You indicate that consideration is being given to asking the Commission to review the health, safety, and environmental questions raised by the Department of Interior for the Ward Valley site. In particular, the Department of Interior would forward its remaining questions to us within 30 days of enacting legislation for our expedited review on the basis of the existing record, and we would be asked to issue a finding within four months of our receipt of those questions on whether current provisions adequately protect public health and safety.

The Commission can comply with such a request if any such legislation is enacted. However, absent additional resources being provided by legislation, we would need to defer other work to make resources available to do the required reviews, although without knowing more about the specific nature and scope of these reviews, we cannot identify what specific work would have to be deferred. Moreover, given the relatively short time provided, we would not be able to involve the public in our expedited review. We estimate it would require additional time -- estimated to be on the order of 4 to 6 additional months -- to obtain, consider, and respond to written comments from the public.

If we can be of further assistance on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

  
Shirley Ann Jackson

cc: Sen. J. Bennett Johnston

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PDR COMMS NRCC  
CORRESPONDENCE PDR

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