

Nye County NWRPO Update

Nye County Department of Natural Resources and Federal Facilities
Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office (NWRPO)

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Congress Considers Interim Storage Legislation

Whatever the final decision is about how to deal with high level waste and spent nuclear fuel storage, Nye County will continue to work for appropriate community protections and mitigation measures to offset the impacts of radioactive waste transport through, and storage within, the

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have recently resurrected legislation which would require DOE to establish a centralized interim storage facility for up to 40,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel as early as 2003. President Clinton continues to promise veto of the legislation.

Energy Secretary Richardson has proposed an alternative to interim storage that includes DOE taking responsibility for temporary storage of waste at reactor sites until a permanent repository site is constructed and open. Members of Congress have expressed concern about the cost of the plan, especially if the ex-

pense of interim storage will be added to the price tag for permanent disposal.

Nuclear power plants concerned about the cost of moving the waste twice, if Yucca Mountain fails, have indicated support for Richardson's proposal. This move represents an unusual break with the power industry's own lobbying efforts in Congress.

Senator Pete Domenici, New Mexico, suggests eliminating funding for DOE's Yucca Mountain program in the FY2000 budget and recommends that Congress focus entirely on transmutation, a process that would destroy plutonium and lower the radioactive content of the waste, while reducing waste volume.

DOE Helps Nye County Prepare for Radioactive Waste Shipments

DOE's Nevada Operations Office and the DOE Fernald plant in Ohio, recently donated a vehicle, trailer, and personal protection equipment to Nye County for use in continuing emergency response planning and readiness activities.

The Fernald site is a major shipper of low-level radioactive waste to the Nevada Test

Site. Shipments from the plant have been on hold since December 1995 following a transportation accident in Kingman, Arizona, but will resume in mid-April.

In response to recommendations from DOE, Fernald has asked trucking companies carrying waste to the NTS to propose routes that avoid the

Hoover Dam and the Las Vegas Valley. New routes may use NV-160 through Pahrump, NV-373 through Amargosa Valley and US-95 through Tonopah, Goldfield and Beatty.

Nye County is working to prepare its' emergency response and medical services to respond to nuclear waste situations

Early Warning Drilling Program Activities Wind Down

Early Warning Drilling Program activities are winding down at the Phase 1, Fiscal Year 1999 sites with the completion of three small diameter monitoring wells in the deep borehole at NC-EWDP-1D.

During March, Westbay instrumentation strings were installed in wells NC-EWDP-1S and NC-EWDP-3S. Data packages are now ready for distribution to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Department of Energy, State of Nevada, and other interested agencies participating in, or closely following, Nye County's data collection activities. EWDP

data packages contain summary material on each drilling site along with the detailed lithologic log, the full suite of borehole geophysical logs, aquifer test data, and information on the construction of each well.

Nye County's technical team continues to monitor water levels in selected wells and will begin monitoring water levels in all EWDP wells during April. The first round of analytical results on water samples collected to date are nearing completion. When these results are available, a supplemental data package will be prepared.

Nye County Participates in Nuclear Regulatory Commission Meetings in Las Vegas & Beatty

A representative from Nye County's Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office participated as a panel member at NRC meetings in Las Vegas and Beatty on March 23rd and 25th.

Malachy R. Murphy, the NWRPO Regulatory and Licensing advisor, presented Nye County's views in a panel discussion of the impact and desirability of NRC's proposed

rules related to the licensing of the Yucca Mountain high-level waste repository.

Nye County Commissioner Jeff Taguchi, Les Bradshaw, manager of the Nye County Department of Natural Resources and Federal Facilities, and Nick Stellavato, the county's On-Site Geotechnical Representative, also attended the meetings.

As a result of public concerns raised at these meetings, the NRC may agree to extend the public comment period on the proposed rule beyond the current May 10th deadline.

Pahrump Valley Emergency Response Map Book in Progress

The NWRPO is preparing an updated digital Pahrump Valley street map as part of a cooperative effort with the Town of Pahrump, the Pahrump Fire Department, the Nye County Planning and Roads Departments and the Valley Electric Association, Inc.

Individual grid maps will be completed for each inhabited section. The updated street map will be used to prepare an emergency response map book for Pahrump. The book is scheduled for

completion in early summer 1999. Emergency response grid maps for other Nye County towns are planned for next year.



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