

Talking Points  
BRC Meeting, December 2, 2011

I am Gary Hollis, Chair, Nye County Board of County Commissioners.

To the point of your first recommendation: “A new, consent-based approach to siting future nuclear waste management facilities.”

As a local community we have a major head start on most scientific and technical issues associated with geologic disposal, DOE has already provided us with information and data that documents more than 30 years of study. We are ready to put that to use now. That should put Nye County at least 20 years ahead of any other community that volunteers. If your first

recommendation gets implemented, you can count on Nye County to volunteer as a consenting local community.

That fact supports your fourth recommendation: “Prompt efforts to develop one or more geologic disposal facilities.” At a House Subcommittee on the Environment and the Economy hearing, Mr. Chris Kouts testified that what was the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management could be restarted in 18 months. Whether re-establishing the DOE role or creating a separate government corporation, continuation of Yucca Mountain licensing is the only prompt way possible to develop a geologic disposal facility for spent nuclear fuel and high level waste.

More importantly, finishing the Yucca Mountain process is the law. I am outraged that Federal law is so blatantly being

ignored. I believe the American people are similarly outraged. Paraphrasing President Ronald Reagan, the public, through our elected officials, have the means to change the law if we disagree with it – but we cannot as citizens, pick and choose the laws we will or will not obey. Congress passed the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. Either it should be followed or Congress should change it. The BRC is not a siting commission, but remaining silent regarding the abandonment of the Yucca Mountain Project has nothing to do with repository siting. Your silence makes you complicit in this violation of Federal law. Claiming that your direction prohibits you from considering Yucca Mountain is also dishonest. Your charter makes no such prohibition and the Federal Advisory Committee Act does not allow the sponsoring authority to unduly influence you as an independent commission.

So, follow the law, put an organization in place, find a better way to access the Nuclear Waste Trust Fund and start moving waste for emplacement. Doing so will allow the United States to maintain our international leadership and the opportunity to advance new ideas in disposal operations.

Your conclusion that disposal is needed and that deep geologic disposal is the scientifically preferred approach has been reached by every expert panel that has looked at the issue and by every other country that is pursuing a nuclear waste management program.

So, exercise your independence and the political courage to include a recommendation endorsing completion of the NRC's review of the Yucca Mountain License application. Thank you.