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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1903

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August 10, 2010

Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Commissioners Meserve, Eisenhower, and Bailey,

Please accept my welcome and appreciation for your acceptance of the Maine Yankee Citizen's Advisory Panel's invitation to hear about this community's issues and concerns about the stored nuclear waste that has remained here in Wiscasset despite the requirements of the Nuclear Policy Act. I also want to express my gratitude to you and the rest of the Commissioners who were unable to attend today for your work on behalf of our country.

I join in welcoming you with the rest of the Congressional Delegation and Governor Baldacci, and I also want to acknowledge the participation of George Richardson, a Member of the Westport Board of Selectmen, Bill Blodgett and Sheridan Bond of the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners, the Wiscasset Selectmen, and Laurie Smith, Wiscasset's Town Manager. This issue is critical for this community's future and our entire Congressional Delegation, the Governor, and local officials are clearly united in effort to remove the 550 metric tons of nuclear waste that has remained here for far too long.

Again, I thank you for your work in providing recommendations to the Secretary of Energy to address the unacceptable impasse regarding spent nuclear waste in our country. The failure of the Department of Energy to execute a nuclear waste policy has cost Maine ratepayers millions of dollars, and unnecessarily prolonged an environmental hazard adjacent to the Sheepscot River. While I appreciate your service to our country to provide recommendations to the Secretary, I do believe it unfortunate that our nuclear waste strategy, which was specifically prescribed in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to create a deep geologic repository, has floundered and led to the creation of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future in 2009.

As I wrote to the Secretary of Energy last year, I believe that the decision to reverse the recommendation of a single repository located at Yucca Mountain was profoundly regrettable and failed to include sufficient legal justification. In my letter to Secretary Chu I asked seven specific questions regarding the decision to close the Yucca Mountain project and to this day I have not received a satisfactory response. While I do believe it is critical that the Commission provide viable policy recommendations, the ratepayers throughout our country deserve a clear and concise analysis of the merits of the decision to, as the DOE's General Counsel recently stated to me, "wind down" Yucca Mountain.

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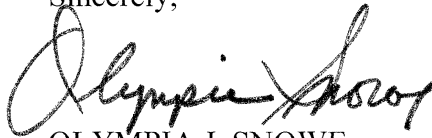
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At the same time, the bottom line is that any progress towards removing this nuclear waste to a more secure location, at a lower cost to Maine ratepayers, is preferable to the status quo. To that end, I believe that the Blue Ribbon Commission should advise the Secretary to prioritize the nuclear waste that remains at decommissioned nuclear energy plants, such as Maine Yankee. In addition, while I strongly support a national repository, I do believe that identifying locations in communities that volunteer to accept nuclear waste should be considered as a short-term solution to reduce costs and minimize the security threat.

The fact is that the current impasse must be addressed expeditiously and I appreciate your willingness to personally review the situation here in Wiscasset, Maine. I look forward to reviewing your report and working together to develop a coherent nuclear waste strategy that does not leave communities like Wiscasset with the expensive, long term burdens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olympia Snowe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "O" and a long, sweeping tail.

OLYMPIA J. SNOWE  
United States Senator