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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

COMMITTEES:  
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ARMED SERVICES  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE  
ON AGING

August 10, 2010

The Honorable Richard Meserve – Co-Chair  
Mr. Phil Sharp – Co-Chair  
Transportation and Storage Subcommittee  
Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future  
1000 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, DC. 20585

Dear Mr. Meserve and Mr. Sharp:

Thank you for agreeing to my request that the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future visit Wiscasset, ME. It is especially important that the Commission see firsthand the impact of the federal government's failure to take responsibility for spent nuclear waste from decommissioned plants.

In 1998, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act required the federal government to accept used nuclear fuel generated by commercial nuclear power plants. The Department of Energy (DOE) is responsible for managing and accepting this fuel. Due to the long delays in licensing a storage facility at Yucca Mountain, DOE has not accepted the waste, and several courts have ruled that the federal government is in breach of its obligation.

Until DOE develops a plan to deal with the waste, decommissioned nuclear power plants like Maine Yankee here in Wiscasset have to store their spent nuclear fuel onsite and charge ratepayers to pay for the storage. Nationwide, the combination of fees for storage and paying out settlements for the lawsuits has already cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. In Maine, the annual cost to electric customers is \$6 - 8 million to store waste.

I urge you to give the utmost priority to removal of waste from shutdown reactors. Ratepayers in the affected states have paid for storing this waste for decades while waiting for the federal government to carry out its mandated responsibility. Also, sites like the location here in Wiscasset could be redeveloped for more economically productive purposes if the waste were removed. This could create much-needed jobs and government revenues to help communities recover from the economic recession.

Thank you for your work on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator



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