

HISTORY OF NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT

As a nation, we have been studying nuclear waste management and geologic disposal for decades. Geologic disposal is widely accepted by experts nationally and internationally as the safe, responsible solution.

The 1987 Amendments to NWPA directed the Department to evaluate only Yucca Mountain. Due to cost escalation and legal challenges, the Department missed the 1998 deadline to begin accepting fuel for disposal.

The BRC issued a final report in January 2012 with recommendations to the Department on developing a long-term solution for managing the nation's nuclear waste.

TIMELINE

DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR POWER AND GEOLOGIC DISPOSAL

- 1950s U.S. begins using nuclear power to generate electricity
- 1957 National Academy of Sciences recommends geologic disposal for disposing of nuclear waste
- 1970 U.S. begins a search for potential repository sites

NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT AND YUCCA MOUNTAIN

- 1982 Congress passes NWPA, establishing process for selecting a disposal site
- 1985 DOE recommends three sites for further study, including Yucca Mountain
- 1987 Congress amends NWPA, directing DOE to study only Yucca Mountain
- 1988-2002 DOE studies Yucca Mountain extensively
- 1998 DOE misses deadline to begin accepting spent nuclear fuel
- FEB 2002 DOE recommends Yucca Mountain as the nation's first disposal site
- APR 2002 Nevada Governor Guinn submits official notice of disapproval to Congress
- JUL 2002 President Bush signs joint resolution approving Yucca Mountain as repository site
- 2008 DOE submits license application for construction of repository to NRC
- 2009 Administration determines Yucca Mountain is not a workable solution. DOE suspends activities at the site

THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION AND CONSENT-BASED SITING

- 2010 Secretary of Energy Chu establishes the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future (BRC)
- 2012 BRC recommends DOE adopt a consent-based approach to siting nuclear waste facilities, including consolidated interim storage and geologic disposal sites
- 2013 DOE releases *Strategy for the Management and Disposal of Used Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste* based on the recommendations from the BRC
- 2015 Secretary of Energy Moniz announces DOE will pursue a consent-based approach to siting facilities for interim storage, as well as disposal of defense and commercial waste

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA) provides the basic policy framework for U.S. efforts to manage nuclear waste. The Act establishes the procedures for evaluating and selecting sites for geologic repositories and sets key milestones for federal agencies to meet in implementing the policy.

The Administration determined that siting a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain was an unworkable solution in 2009, and formed the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future in 2010.

The Administration issued the 2013 Strategy for the Management and Disposal of Used Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste, which applies the principles of the BRC recommendations to a framework for a sustainable program to manage our nation's nuclear waste.

