



HEALTH PHYSICS SOCIETY

“Specialists in Radiation Safety”

RAYMOND A. GUILMETTE, President

Los Alamos National Laboratory
MS E546, HSR-12
Los Alamos, NM 87545
Telephone: 505-665-5059
Fax: 505-665-2052
Email: rguilmet@lanl.gov

July 20, 2004

The Honorable Pete V. Domenici
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Domenici:

In light of the recent decision by the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit concerning Yucca Mountain (*Nuclear Energy Institute v. Environmental Protection Agency, No. 01-1258*), I would like to reaffirm the position of the Health Physics Society regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) performance standard for protection of the public for release of radioactive material from the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository.

By letter of 5 February 1997, Society President Richard Vetter conveyed to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee the Society's support for the standard for safe and proper disposal of high-level radioactive waste contained in the 105th Congress' S.104, the "Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1997," paragraph 205(d), as introduced to the Senate. This letter forwarded and reaffirmed a letter of July 25, 1996, in which the Society established its position in support of this standard, then contained in the 104th Congress' S.1936, the "Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1996." A copy of the 1997 letter and its attachment are enclosed.

The two previous letters specifically stated the Society's support for an overall performance standard prohibiting releases that would expose an average member of the general population in the vicinity of the Yucca Mountain site to an annual dose in excess of 100 millirem. However, the letters referenced the entire Section 205(d) of both bills, which provides for the repository licensing standards to include analysis of the repository performance out to 10,000 years after commencement of operation of the repository (Section 205(d)(4)). The Society's support for the standard, which was first expressed in 1996, included support for all provisions of the standard including terminating the analysis at 10,000 years.

This letter reaffirms the Society's support at this time for the performance standard, including analysis of the overall system performance for the first 10,000 years after the commencement of operation of the repository. A period of 10,000 years exceeds a reasonable period for assessing potential future human health consequences.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the Society's position on the existing EPA performance standards for Yucca Mountain.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray A. Guilmette". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Raymond A. Guilmette, PhD

Enclosure



HEALTH PHYSICS SOCIETY

Specialists in Radiation Safety

5 February 1997

Karen Hunsicker, Counsel
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6150

PRESIDENT-ELECT 1995-1996
PRESIDENT 1996-1997
PAST PRESIDENT 1997-1998
RICHARD J. VETTER
Mayo Clinic
Radiation Safety Office
Rochester, MN 55905
Telephone: (507) 284-4408
FAX: (507) 284-0150
E-Mail: rvetter@mayo.edu

Dear Ms. Hunsicker:

I understand that the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is again considering nuclear waste legislation (S. 104) with a 100 millirem annual dose standard (Section 205(d)). This standard is essentially identical to that contained in the previous nuclear waste legislation (S. 1936) passed by the Senate during the 104th Congress. By letter dated July 25, 1996 the Health Physics Society conveyed to members of the Senate its support of the above cited standard for safe and proper disposal of high-level radioactive waste (copy enclosed). At this time, we reaffirm our support of the 100 millirem standard, and strongly urge its adoption.

We request that this letter, along with the enclosed copy of our July 25, 1996 letter, be entered as part of the testimony being considered by the Committee in its deliberation of S. 104.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Vetter
President

RJV:WAM:al



HEALTH PHYSICS SOCIETY

1313 Dolley Madison Blvd Suite 402, McLean VA 22101 Tele 703-790-1745 Fax 703-790-2672 Email hpsburkmg@aol.com

July 25, 1996

The Honorable
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

We understand that high-level waste legislation (S. 1936) is being considered on the Senate floor. It has been suggested that the 100 millirem annual dose standard contained in S. 1936 does not provide adequate protection of public health and the environment. We disagree. The purpose of this letter is to convey the support of the Health Physics Society of the 100 millirem standard as proposed in S. 1936.

The Health Physics Society is a non-profit organization of 7,600 scientists and professionals dedicated to protecting public health and the environment in conjunction with the beneficial use of radiation.

As an overall performance standard, 100 millirem per year is consistent with the most recent recommendations of the national and international radiological protection committees for protecting the public from man-made sources of ionizing radiation. It is also consistent with current Federal and state radiation protection regulations that apply to the more than 20,000 licensees using radiation in the U.S. Estimates of human cancer risk by the NAS and the UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) are discernible with a reasonable degree of certainty only at doses above 10,000 millirem. Numerous epidemiological and biological studies have not shown any risks at the levels proposed in this standard. Therefore, the 100 millirem standard will provide a level of public protection that will prevent discernible health effects. In summary, on behalf of the 7,600 members of our Society, we strongly support adoption of the 100 millirem standard in S. 1936 for safe and proper disposal of high-level waste.

Your consideration in this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Vetter, PhD
President, 1996-97

William A. Mills, PhD
President, 1995-96

Marvin Goldman, PhD
President, 1994-95

Kenneth L. Mossman, PhD
President, 1993-94

Keith J. Schiager, PhD
President, 1992-93

Otto A. Raabe, PhD
President, 1997-98