

Letter to Congressional Leaders Recommending the Yucca Mountain Site
for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and Nuclear Waste
February 15, 2002

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 114 of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, 42 U.S.C. 10134 (the "Act"), the Secretary of Energy has recommended approval of the Yucca Mountain site for the development at that site of a repository for the geologic disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high level nuclear waste from the Nation's defense activities. As is required by the Act, the Secretary has also submitted to me a comprehensive statement of the basis of his recommendation.

Having received the Secretary's recommendation and the comprehensive statement of the basis of it, I consider the Yucca Mountain site qualified for application for a construction authorization for a repository. Therefore, I now recommend the Yucca Mountain site for this purpose. In accordance with section 114 of the Act, I am transmitting with this recommendation to the Congress a copy of the comprehensive statement of the basis of the Secretary's recommendation prepared pursuant to the Act. The transmission of this document triggers an expedited process described in the Act. I urge the Congress to undertake any necessary legislative action on this recommendation in an expedited and bipartisan fashion.

Proceeding with the repository program is necessary to protect public safety, health, and the Nation's security because successful completion of this project would isolate in a geologic repository at a remote location highly radioactive materials now scattered throughout the Nation. In addition, the geologic repository would support our national security through disposal of nuclear waste from our defense facilities.

A deep geologic repository, such as Yucca Mountain, is important for our national security and our energy future. Nu-

clear energy is the second largest source of U.S. electricity generation and must remain a major component of our national energy policy in the years to come. The cost of nuclear power compares favorably with the costs of electricity generation by other sources, and nuclear power has none of the emissions associated with coal and gas power plants.

This recommendation, if it becomes effective, will permit commencement of the next rigorous stage of scientific and technical review of the repository program through formal licensing proceedings before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Successful completion of this program also will redeem the clear Federal legal obligation safely to dispose of commercial spent nuclear fuel that the Congress passed in 1982.

This recommendation is the culmination of two decades of intense scientific scrutiny involving application of an array of scientific and technical disciplines necessary and appropriate for this challenging undertaking. It is an undertaking that was mandated twice by the Congress when it legislated the obligations that would be redeemed by successful pursuit of the repository program. Allowing this recommendation to come into effect will enable the beginning of the next phase of intense scrutiny of the project necessary to assure the public health, safety, and security in the area of Yucca Mountain, and also to enhance the safety and security of the Nation as a whole.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Rep-

resentatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

The President's Radio Address *February 16, 2002*

Good morning. Today I'm flying west across the Pacific to visit Japan, South Korea, and China. The people of Tokyo, Seoul, and Beijing touched all our hearts in the days after September 11, with moving displays of sympathy and support in the wake of the terrorist attacks. Today, all three nations are supporting our fight against terrorism.

I look forward to discussing our progress in ridding the world of this great threat to civilization, and we'll discuss our work to build a better world beyond terror, a world of greater opportunity and more open trade, stronger security and more individual freedom.

I will speak to the Japanese Parliament and thank Japan for five decades of friendship. Our great alliance has helped make possible the remarkable economic success of the Pacific region, which creates so much opportunity and so many jobs for Americans.

Today, Japan is in the midst of economic uncertainty and transition. But I have great confidence in Japan's future and in the unlimited potential of its people. And I'm confident that Japan will make the bold reforms needed to restore growth and opportunity, which will benefit the people of both our nations.

I will visit South Korea and travel to the Demilitarized Zone, one of the most dangerous places on Earth, where barbed wire marks a line dividing freedom and oppression. I will visit with American service men and women who defend this frontier and provide stability on the Korean Peninsula.

The people of South Korea have built a vibrant democracy and Asia's third largest economy. The people of the South are now reaching out to the North in a spirit of friendship and reconciliation. I support these efforts. Yet I will remind the world that America will not allow North Korea and other dangerous regimes to threaten freedom with weapons of mass destruction.

In China, I look forward to seeing again firsthand the remarkable changes that are taking place as China opens to the world. America welcomes China's recent entry into the World Trade Organization, which will encourage American trade with China and encourage economic freedom and the rule of law in China itself.

I look forward to talking to the Chinese about their commitment to open up their markets to U.S. agricultural products. I'm also looking forward to meeting with Chinese students, because it gives me an opportunity to talk about the America I know, an America with strong values of family, community, faith, and freedom. And I will express my hopes that as China moves forward, it too will embrace the universal demands of human dignity, freedom of conscience and religion, and the rights and value of every life.

The flight across the northern Pacific is a long one. But in our spirit of friendship and cooperation, the nations of the northern Pacific are drawing ever closer. All around this great ocean we see good friends, Canada and Australia, New Zealand and Thailand, the Philippines and Taiwan. And they will find in America a nation that is determined and patient and committed to the great cause of building a world that