

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING BOARD

Before Administrative Judges:

Thomas S. Moore, Chairman  
Paul S. Ryerson  
Richard E. Wardwell

In the Matter of  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
(High Level Waste Repository)

Docket No. 63-001-HLW  
ASLBP No. 09-892-HLW-CAB04  
December 22, 2009

ORDER  
(Concerning LSNA Memorandum)

The Licensing Support Network Administrator (LSNA) has provided the Board, and served on the parties, a memorandum dated December 17, 2009. For convenience, a copy is attached.

The parties should be prepared to discuss the issues and questions raised by the LSNA during the oral argument on legal issues at one of the previously scheduled argument dates. The Board is especially interested in DOE's position with respect to the LSNA's conclusions that (1) "[t]echnologically, the DOE [LSN] collection will be extremely difficult to salvage if it is ever decommissioned;" and (2) "[t]o preserve this . . . information would require aggregating the current page-level data back into document-level entities and converting the document-level data to text-searchable Portable Document Format (PDF)." DOE and any other party that wishes to comment in writing on the LSNA's memorandum is encouraged to do so, preferably no later than January 21, 2010.

The Board has not been advised by counsel that DOE intends to withdraw or suspend the Application. Until so advised, the Board expects the parties to proceed in accordance with Case Management Order #2 and all other applicable orders and regulations.

Should DOE seek to withdraw the Application, however, the parties are reminded that, pursuant to 10 C.F.R. § 2.107, withdrawal shall be on such terms as the Board may prescribe. To ensure that all appropriate options remain available to the Board in that regard, we direct the parties not to take any actions at this time that would prevent or hinder their ability to archive LSN documentary material in a readily accessible format, such as PDF.

It is so ORDERED.

FOR THE ATOMIC SAFETY  
AND LICENSING BOARD

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Thomas S. Moore, Chairman  
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

Rockville, Maryland  
December 22, 2009



UNITED STATES  
**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
**ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING BOARD PANEL**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20555 - 0001

December 17, 2009

MEMORANDUM TO:           Administrative Judge Thomas S. Moore  
  Chair, Construction Authorization Board 4

  Administrative Judge Paul S. Ryerson  
  Member, Construction Authorization Board 4

  Administrative Judge Richard E. Wardwall  
  Member, Construction Authorization Board 4

FROM:                         Daniel J. Graser           */RA/*  
  Licensing Support Network Administrator

SUBJECT:                    ISSUES REGARDING FUNDING FOR CONTINUED  
  OPERATION OF THE LICENSING SUPPORT NETWORK

In accord with 10 C.F.R. § 2.1011(c) (1), I wish to advise Construction Authorization Board (CAB) 4 of a potential matter for its consideration.

Recent press reports have indicated that the Department of Energy (DOE) is seriously considering attempting to withdraw the Yucca Mountain high-level waste (HLW) repository construction authorization application or otherwise suspend its participation in the HLW repository licensing proceeding. Presumably, this would also involve some action that would suspend or terminate its involvement in the Licensing Support Network (LSN). As a search and retrieval interface using internet technology, the LSN has been implemented in such a way that each party operates and pays for the maintenance of its own document collection, with no single organization being the custodian of the entire corpus. As a consequence, for any scenario that involves long-term suspension or termination of the licensing proceeding, a number of technical issues arises relative to the LSN, including:

1. If DOE takes its existing document collection off-line and/or archives that collection, all of the DOE collection pointers in the LSN portal will generate an internet error message that the file is not available. Because DOE's material represents 98.9 percent of the entire LSN collection content, this would be a significant blow to the continued viability of the LSN.
2. Based on my understanding of the computer infrastructure of the DOE system, it is questionable whether that system could operate in a "lights-out" mode (i.e., left "on" under the care of a contractor but with no active maintenance or oversight by DOE employees) for any extended period of time without some hardware or software failure being experienced that would render the DOE collection inaccessible.

3. It is also questionable whether the LSN system – including the current LSN portal website as it is operated by the LSN Administrator -- could be restored once it has been decommissioned for any extended period of time. To resurrect the LSN portal site alone likely would require five years and multiple millions of dollars.
4. Technologically, the DOE collection will be extremely difficult to salvage if it is ever decommissioned. The DOE collection was built using custom code that essentially recreates documents “on-the-fly” when they are requested via the LSN portal. It is highly unlikely that the original application software developed years ago by DOE’s Management & Operations (M&O) contractors, in conjunction with the approximately 83,630,000 unstructured, individual page-level data files comprising the images, text, HTML and bibliographic components of the DOE documents, can be restored to operate successfully years in the future by individuals with no previous experience with DOE’s current operating environment on a new system employing new hardware and a new or updated operating system. To preserve this valuable scientific, engineering, and historical information would require aggregating the current page-level data back into document-level entities and converting the document-level data to text-searchable Portable Document Format (PDF). That information in PDF format then would require long-term custodianship.
5. From inquiries to LSN staff by a number of the Affected Units of Local Government (AULGs), parties currently are confronted with deciding what commitment to make for webhosting agreements to sustain their document collections, which is a difficult business decision in light of recent press coverage indicating the DOE license application may be withdrawn.

The current climate of uncertainty about whether the DOE license application is going to be withdrawn is anathema to the good management and planning essential for maintaining a sophisticated computer infrastructure like the LSN -- whether a party’s document collection is large or small. Accordingly, in addition to alerting the Board to the looming major technology and investment issues specified above, I would suggest that further inquiry be made of the parties to obtain information that is needed to fully understand and attempt to address these issues. It thus is my recommendation that DOE and the other parties to the proceeding, as specified below, be queried as to:

- A. The exact DOE budget and FTE allocations for the operation of its LSN collection that can be expected for the remainder of FY 2010 and for FY 2011.
- B. DOE’s precise plans, and contingency plans, for maintaining its LSN document collection under its FY 2010 and FY 2011 budget allocations.
- C. Under a scenario in which parties would no longer be required to maintain an active LSN document collection, each party’s intended disposition plans for all data and documents that are currently regulated pursuant to 10 C.F.R. Part 2, Subpart J.

As long as the Nuclear Waste Policy Act is operative and the agency’s regulations for the conduct of hearings related to the licensing of a geologic repository are in effect, I recommend that all appropriate steps be taken by the Board to ensure that no party takes any action relative to its LSN collection that would be prejudicial to the current, or any future, geologic repository licensing effort

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY )  
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Docket No. 63-001-HLW  
ASLBP No. 09-892-HLW-CAB04

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing **ORDER (Concerning LSNA Memorandum)** dated December 22, 2009, have been served upon the following persons by Electronic Information Exchange.

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLBP)  
Mail Stop T-3F23  
Washington, DC 20555-0001

**Construction Authorization Board (CAB) 04**

Thomas S. Moore, Chair  
Administrative Judge  
[tsm2@nrc.gov](mailto:tsm2@nrc.gov)

Paul S. Ryerson  
Administrative Judge  
[psr1@nrc.gov](mailto:psr1@nrc.gov)

Richard E. Wardwell  
Administrative Judge  
[rew@nrc.gov](mailto:rew@nrc.gov)

Anthony C. Eitreim, Esq., Chief Counsel  
[ace1@nrc.gov](mailto:ace1@nrc.gov)  
Daniel J. Graser, LSN Administrator  
[djg2@nrc.gov](mailto:djg2@nrc.gov)  
Zachary Kahn, Law Clerk  
[zxk1@nrc.gov](mailto:zxk1@nrc.gov)  
Erica LaPlante, Law Clerk  
[eal1@nrc.gov](mailto:eal1@nrc.gov)

Matthew Rotman, Law Clerk  
[matthew.rotman@nrc.gov](mailto:matthew.rotman@nrc.gov)  
Katherine Tucker, Law Clerk  
[katie.tucker@nrc.gov](mailto:katie.tucker@nrc.gov)  
Joseph Deucher  
[jhd@nrc.gov](mailto:jhd@nrc.gov)  
Andrew Welkie  
[axw5@nrc.gov](mailto:axw5@nrc.gov)  
Jack Whetstine  
[jgw@nrc.gov](mailto:jgw@nrc.gov)  
Patricia Harich  
[patricia.harich@nrc.gov](mailto:patricia.harich@nrc.gov)  
Sara Culler  
[sara.culler@nrc.gov](mailto:sara.culler@nrc.gov)

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Office of the General Counsel  
Mail Stop O-15D21  
Washington, DC 20555-0001  
Margaret J. Bupp, Esq.  
[mjb5@nrc.gov](mailto:mjb5@nrc.gov)  
Michael G. Dreher, Esq.  
[michael.dreher@nrc.gov](mailto:michael.dreher@nrc.gov)  
Karin Francis, Paralegal  
[kxf4@nrc.gov](mailto:kxf4@nrc.gov)  
Adam Gendelman, Esq.  
[adam.gendelman@nrc.gov](mailto:adam.gendelman@nrc.gov)  
Joseph S. Gilman, Paralegal  
[jsg1@nrc.gov](mailto:jsg1@nrc.gov)  
Daniel W. Lenehan, Esq.  
[daniel.lenehan@nrc.gov](mailto:daniel.lenehan@nrc.gov)  
Andrea L. Silvia, Esq.  
[alc1@nrc.gov](mailto:alc1@nrc.gov)  
Mitzi A. Young, Esq.  
[may@nrc.gov](mailto:may@nrc.gov)  
Marian L. Zabler, Esq.  
[mlz@nrc.gov](mailto:mlz@nrc.gov)  
OGC Mail Center  
[OGCMailCenter@nrc.gov](mailto:OGCMailCenter@nrc.gov)

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Office of Commission Appellate Adjudication  
Mail Stop O-16C1  
Washington, DC 20555-0001  
OCA Mail Center  
[ocaamail@nrc.gov](mailto:ocaamail@nrc.gov)

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Office of the Secretary of the Commission  
Mail Stop O-16C1  
Washington, DC 20555-0001  
Hearing Docket  
[hearingdocket@nrc.gov](mailto:hearingdocket@nrc.gov)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (High Level Waste Repository) Docket No. 63-001-HLW  
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U.S. Department of Energy  
Office of General Counsel  
1000 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, DC 20585  
Martha S. Crosland, Esq.  
[martha.crosland@hq.doe.gov](mailto:martha.crosland@hq.doe.gov)  
Nicholas P. DiNunzio, Esq.  
[nick.dinunzio@rw.doe.gov](mailto:nick.dinunzio@rw.doe.gov)  
James Bennett McRae  
[ben.mcrae@hq.doe.gov](mailto:ben.mcrae@hq.doe.gov)  
Cyrus Nezhad, Esq.  
[cyrus.nezhad@hq.doe.gov](mailto:cyrus.nezhad@hq.doe.gov)  
Christina C. Pak, Esq.  
[christina.pak@hq.doe.gov](mailto:christina.pak@hq.doe.gov)

U.S. Department of Energy  
Office of General Counsel  
1551 Hillshire Drive  
Las Vegas, NV 89134-6321  
Jocelyn M. Gutierrez, Esq.  
[jocelyn.gutierrez@ymp.gov](mailto:jocelyn.gutierrez@ymp.gov)  
Josephine L. Sommer, Paralegal  
[josephine.sommer@ymp.gov](mailto:josephine.sommer@ymp.gov)

For U.S. Department of Energy  
Office of Counsel, Naval Sea Systems Command  
Nuclear Propulsion Program  
1333 Isaac Hull Avenue, SE, Building 197  
Washington, DC 20376  
Frank A. Putzu, Esq.  
[frank.putzu@navy.mil](mailto:frank.putzu@navy.mil)

For U.S. Department of Energy  
Talisman International, LLC  
1000 Potomac St., NW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20007  
Patricia Larimore, Senior Paralegal  
[plarimore@talisman-intl.com](mailto:plarimore@talisman-intl.com)

For U.S. Department of Energy  
USA-Repository Services LLC  
Yucca Mountain Project Licensing Group  
1160 N. Town Center Drive, Suite 240  
Las Vegas, NV 89144  
Stephen J. Cereghino, Licensing/Nucl Safety  
[stephen\\_cereghino@ymp.gov](mailto:stephen_cereghino@ymp.gov)  
Jeffrey Kriner, Regulatory Programs  
[jeffrey\\_kriner@ymp.gov](mailto:jeffrey_kriner@ymp.gov)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (High Level Waste Repository) Docket No. 63-001-HLW  
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Counsel for U.S. Department of Energy  
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP  
1111 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
Clifford W. Cooper, Paralegal  
[ccooper@morganlewis.com](mailto:ccooper@morganlewis.com)  
Lewis M. Csedrik, Esq.  
[lcshedrik@morganlewis.com](mailto:lcshedrik@morganlewis.com)  
Jay M. Gutierrez, Esq.  
[jgutierrez@morganlewis.com](mailto:jgutierrez@morganlewis.com)  
Charles B. Moldenhauer, Esq.  
[cmoldenhauer@morganlewis.com](mailto:cmoldenhauer@morganlewis.com)  
Thomas D. Poindexter, Esq.  
[tpoindexter@morganlewis.com](mailto:tpoindexter@morganlewis.com)  
Alex S. Polonsky, Esq.  
[apolonsky@morganlewis.com](mailto:apolonsky@morganlewis.com)  
Thomas A. Schmutz, Esq.  
[tschmutz@morganlewis.com](mailto:tschmutz@morganlewis.com)  
Donald J. Silverman, Esq.  
[dsilverman@morganlewis.com](mailto:dsilverman@morganlewis.com)  
Shannon Staton, Legal Secretary  
[sstaton@morganlewis.com](mailto:sstaton@morganlewis.com)  
Annette M. White, Esq.  
[Annette.white@morganlewis.com](mailto:Annette.white@morganlewis.com)  
Paul J. Zaffuts, Esq.  
[pzaffuts@morganlewis.com](mailto:pzaffuts@morganlewis.com)

Counsel for State of Nevada  
Egan, Fitzpatrick, Malsch & Lawrence, PLLC  
1750 K Street, NW, Suite 350  
Washington, DC 20006  
Martin G. Malsch, Esq.  
[mmalsch@nuclearlawyer.com](mailto:mmalsch@nuclearlawyer.com)  
Susan Montesi:  
[smontesi@nuclearlawyer.com](mailto:smontesi@nuclearlawyer.com)

Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects  
Nuclear Waste Project Office  
1761 East College Parkway, Suite 118  
Carson City, NV 89706  
Steve Frishman, Tech. Policy Coordinator  
[steve.frishman@gmail.com](mailto:steve.frishman@gmail.com)  
Susan Lynch, Administrator of Technical Prgms  
[szeeee@nuc.state.nv.us](mailto:szeeee@nuc.state.nv.us)

Counsel for U.S. Department of Energy  
Hunton & Williams LLP  
Riverfront Plaza, East Tower  
951 East Byrd Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Kelly L. Faglioni, Esq.  
[kfaglioni@hunton.com](mailto:kfaglioni@hunton.com)  
Donald P. Irwin, Esq.  
[dirwin@hunton.com](mailto:dirwin@hunton.com)  
Stephanie Meharg, Paralegal  
[smeharg@hunton.com](mailto:smeharg@hunton.com)  
Michael R. Shebelskie, Esq.  
[mshebelskie@hunton.com](mailto:mshebelskie@hunton.com)  
Belinda A. Wright, Sr. Professional Assistant  
[bwright@hunton.com](mailto:bwright@hunton.com)

Counsel for State of Nevada  
Egan, Fitzpatrick, Malsch & Lawrence, PLLC  
12500 San Pedro Avenue, Suite 555  
San Antonio, TX 78216  
Laurie Borski, Paralegal  
[lborski@nuclearlawyer.com](mailto:lborski@nuclearlawyer.com)  
Charles J. Fitzpatrick, Esq.  
[cfitzpatrick@nuclearlawyer.com](mailto:cfitzpatrick@nuclearlawyer.com)  
John W. Lawrence, Esq.  
[jlawrence@nuclearlawyer.com](mailto:jlawrence@nuclearlawyer.com)

Bureau of Government Affairs  
Nevada Attorney General  
100 N. Carson Street  
Carson City, NV 89701  
Marta Adams, Chief Deputy Attorney General  
[madams@ag.nv.gov](mailto:madams@ag.nv.gov)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (High Level Waste Repository) Docket No. 63-001-HLW  
ORDER (Concerning LSNA Memorandum)

Counsel for Lincoln County, Nevada  
1100 S. Tenth Street  
Las Vegas, NV 89017  
Annie Bailey, Legal Assistant  
[baileys@lcturbonet.com](mailto:baileys@lcturbonet.com)  
Eric Hinckley, Law Clerk  
[erichinckley@yahoo.com](mailto:erichinckley@yahoo.com)  
Bret Whipple, Esq.  
[bretwhipple@nomademail.com](mailto:bretwhipple@nomademail.com)

Lincoln County District Attorney  
P. O. Box 60  
Pioche, NV 89403  
Gregory Barlow, Esq.  
[lcda@lcturbonet.com](mailto:lcda@lcturbonet.com)

Lincoln County Nuclear Oversight Program  
P.O. Box 1068  
Caliente, NV 89008  
Connie Simkins, Coordinator  
[jcciac@co.lincoln.nv.us](mailto:jcciac@co.lincoln.nv.us)

For Lincoln County, Nevada  
Intertech Services Corporation  
PO Box 2008  
Carson City, NV 89702  
Mike Baughman, Consultant  
[mikebaughman@charter.net](mailto:mikebaughman@charter.net)

Counsel for Nye County, Nevada  
Ackerman Senterfitt  
801 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, #600  
Washington, DC 20004  
Robert Andersen, Esq.  
[robert.andersen@akerman.com](mailto:robert.andersen@akerman.com)

Counsel for Nye County, Nevada  
530 Farrington Court  
Las Vegas, NV 89123  
Jeffrey VanNiel, Esq.  
[nbrjdn@gmail.com](mailto:nbrjdn@gmail.com)

Nye County Regulatory/Licensing Advisor  
18160 Cottonwood Rd. #265  
Sunriver, OR 97707  
Malachy Murphy, Esq.  
[mrmurphy@chamberscable.com](mailto:mrmurphy@chamberscable.com)

Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project  
Office (NWRPO)  
2101 E. Calvada Boulevard, Suite 100  
Pahrump, NV 89048  
Zoie Choate, Secretary  
[zchoate@co.nye.nv.us](mailto:zchoate@co.nye.nv.us)  
Sherry Dudley, Admin. Technical Coordinator  
[sdudley@co.nye.nv.us](mailto:sdudley@co.nye.nv.us)

Clark County, Nevada  
500 S. Grand Central Parkway  
Las Vegas, NV 98155  
Phil Klevatorick, Sr. Mgmt Analyst  
[klevatorick@co.clark.nv.us](mailto:klevatorick@co.clark.nv.us)  
Elizabeth A. Vibert, Deputy District Attorney  
[Elizabeth.Vibert@ccdavn.com](mailto:Elizabeth.Vibert@ccdavn.com)

Counsel for Clark County, Nevada  
Jennings, Strouss & Salmon  
8330 W. Sahara Avenue, #290  
Las Vegas, NV 89117  
Bryce Loveland, Esq.  
[bloveland@jsslaw.com](mailto:bloveland@jsslaw.com)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (High Level Waste Repository) Docket No. 63-001-HLW  
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Counsel for Clark County, Nevada  
Jennings, Strouss & Salmon  
1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20006-4725  
Elene Belte, Legal Secretary  
[ebelete@jsslw.com](mailto:ebelete@jsslw.com)  
Alan I. Robbins, Esq.  
[arobbins@jsslw.com](mailto:arobbins@jsslw.com)  
Debra D. Roby, Esq.  
[droby@jsslw.com](mailto:droby@jsslw.com)

Eureka County, Nevada  
Office of the District Attorney  
701 S. Main Street, Box 190  
Eureka, NV 89316-0190  
Theodore Beutel, District Attorney  
[tbeutel.ecda@eurekanv.org](mailto:tbeutel.ecda@eurekanv.org)

Counsel for Eureka County, Nevada  
Harmon, Curran, Spielberg & Eisenberg, LLP  
1726 M. Street N.W., Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20036  
Diane Curran, Esq.  
[dcurran@harmoncurran.com](mailto:dcurran@harmoncurran.com)  
Matthew Fraser, Law Clerk  
[mfraser@harmoncurran.com](mailto:mfraser@harmoncurran.com)

Eureka County Public Works  
PO Box 714  
Eureka, NV 89316  
Ronald Damele, Director  
[rdamele@eurekanv.org](mailto:rdamele@eurekanv.org)

Nuclear Waste Advisory for Eureka  
County, Nevada  
1983 Maison Way  
Carson City, NV 89703  
Abigail Johnson, Consultant  
[eurekanrc@gmail.com](mailto:eurekanrc@gmail.com)

For Eureka County, Nevada  
NWOP Consulting, Inc.  
1705 Wildcat Lane  
Ogden, UT 84403  
Loreen Pitchford, Consultant  
[lpitchford@comcast.net](mailto:lpitchford@comcast.net)

Counsel for Churchill, Esmeralda, Lander,  
and Mineral Counties, Nevada  
Armstrong Teasdale, LLP  
1975 Village Center Circle, Suite 140  
Las Vegas, NV 89134-6237  
Jennifer A. Gores, Esq.  
[jgores@armstrongteasdale.com](mailto:jgores@armstrongteasdale.com)  
Robert F. List, Esq.  
[rlist@armstrongteasdale.com](mailto:rlist@armstrongteasdale.com)

Esmeralda County Repository Oversight Program-  
Yucca Mountain Project  
PO Box 490  
Goldfield, NV 89013  
Edwin Mueller, Director  
[muellered@msn.com](mailto:muellered@msn.com)

Mineral County Nuclear Projects Office  
P.O. Box 1600  
Hawthorne, NV 89415  
Linda Mathias, Director  
[yuccainfo@mineralcountynv.org](mailto:yuccainfo@mineralcountynv.org)

For City of Caliente, Lincoln County, and  
White Pine County, Nevada  
P.O. Box 126  
Caliente, NV 89008  
Jason Pitts, LSN Administrator  
[jayson@idtservices.com](mailto:jayson@idtservices.com)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (High Level Waste Repository) Docket No. 63-001-HLW  
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White Pine County, Nevada  
Office of the District Attorney  
801 Clark Street, #3  
Ely, NV 89301  
Richard Sears, District Attorney  
[rwsears@wpcda.org](mailto:rwsears@wpcda.org)

White Pine County Nuclear Waste Project Office  
959 Campton Street  
Ely, NV 89301  
Mike Simon, Director  
[wpnucwst1@mwpower.net](mailto:wpnucwst1@mwpower.net)  
Melanie Martinez, Sr. Management Assistant  
[wpnucwst2@mwpower.net](mailto:wpnucwst2@mwpower.net)

For White Pine County, Nevada  
Intertech Services Corporation  
PO Box 2008  
Carson City, NV 89702  
Mike Baughman, Consultant  
[bigboff@aol.com](mailto:bigboff@aol.com)

Counsel for Caliente Hot Springs Resort LLC  
John H. Huston, Attorney at Law  
6772 Running Colors Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89131  
John H. Huston, Esq.  
[johnhhuston@gmail.com](mailto:johnhhuston@gmail.com)

Counsel for Inyo County, California  
Law Office of Michael Berger  
479 El Sueno Road  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
Michael Berger, Esq.  
[michael@lawofficeofmichaelberger.com](mailto:michael@lawofficeofmichaelberger.com)  
Robert Hanna, Esq.  
[robert@lawofficeofmichaelberger.com](mailto:robert@lawofficeofmichaelberger.com)

Counsel for Inyo County, California  
Greg James, Attorney at Law  
710 Autumn Leaves Circle  
Bishop, CA 93514  
E-Mail: [gjames@earthlink.net](mailto:gjames@earthlink.net)

Inyo County Yucca Mountain Repository  
Assessment Office  
P. O. Box 367  
Independence, CA 93526-0367  
Alisa M. Lembke, Project Analyst  
[alembke@inyocounty.us](mailto:alembke@inyocounty.us)

California Department of Justice  
Office of the Attorney General  
1300 I Street, P.O. Box 944255  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2550  
Susan Durbin, Deputy Attorney General  
[susan.durbin@doj.ca.gov](mailto:susan.durbin@doj.ca.gov)  
Michele Mercado, Analyst  
[michele.Mercado@doj.ca.gov](mailto:michele.Mercado@doj.ca.gov)

California Department of Justice  
Office of the Attorney General  
1515 Clay Street, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, P.O. Box 70550  
Oakland, CA 94612-0550  
Timothy E. Sullivan, Deputy Attorney General  
[timothy.Sullivan@doj.ca.gov](mailto:timothy.Sullivan@doj.ca.gov)

California Department of Justice  
300 S. Spring Street, Suite 1702  
Los Angeles, CA 90013  
Brian Hembacher, Deputy Attorney General  
[brian.hembacher@doj.ca.gov](mailto:brian.hembacher@doj.ca.gov)

California Energy Commission  
1516 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Kevin, W. Bell, Senior Staff Counsel  
[kwbell@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:kwbell@energy.state.ca.us)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (High Level Waste Repository) Docket No. 63-001-HLW  
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Nuclear Energy Institute  
Office of the General Counsel  
1776 I Street, NW Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20006-3708  
Michael A. Bauser, Esq.  
[mab@nei.org](mailto:mab@nei.org)  
Anne W. Cottingham, Esq.  
[awc@nei.org](mailto:awc@nei.org)  
Ellen C. Ginsberg, Esq.  
[ecg@nei.org](mailto:ecg@nei.org)

Counsel for Nuclear Energy Institute  
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP  
2300 N Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20037-1122  
Jay E. Silberg, Esq.  
[jay.silberg@pillsburylaw.com](mailto:jay.silberg@pillsburylaw.com)  
Timothy J.V. Walsh, Esq.  
[timothy.walsh@pillsburylaw.com](mailto:timothy.walsh@pillsburylaw.com)  
Maria D. Webb, Senior Energy Legal Analyst  
[maria.webb@pillsburylaw.com](mailto:maria.webb@pillsburylaw.com)

Counsel for Nuclear Energy Institute  
Winston & Strawn LLP  
1700 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006-3817  
William A. Horin, Esq.  
[whorin@winston.com](mailto:whorin@winston.com)  
Rachel Miras-Wilson, Esq.  
[rwilson@winston.com](mailto:rwilson@winston.com)  
David A. Repka, Esq.  
[drepka@winston.com](mailto:drepka@winston.com)  
Carlos L. Sisco, Senior Paralegal  
[csisco@winston.com](mailto:csisco@winston.com)

Native Community Action Council  
P.O. Box 140  
Baker, NV 89311  
Ian Zabarte, Member of Board of Directors  
[mrizabarte@gmail.com](mailto:mrizabarte@gmail.com)

Counsel for Native Community Action Council  
Alexander, Berkey, Williams & Weathers LLP  
2030 Addison Street, Suite 410  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
Curtis G. Berkey, Esq.  
[cberkey@abwwlaw.com](mailto:cberkey@abwwlaw.com)  
Rovianne A. Leigh, Esq.  
[rleigh@abwwlaw.com](mailto:rleigh@abwwlaw.com)  
Scott W. Williams, Esq.  
[swilliams@abwwlaw.com](mailto:swilliams@abwwlaw.com)

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For Joint Timbisha Shoshone Tribal Group  
3560 Savoy Boulevard  
Pahrump, NV 89601  
Joe Kennedy, Executive Director  
[joekennedy08@live.com](mailto:joekennedy08@live.com)  
Tameka Vazquez, Bookkeeper  
[purpose\\_driven12@yahoo.com](mailto:purpose_driven12@yahoo.com)

Counsel for Joint Timbisha Shoshone Tribal Group  
Fredericks, Peebles, & Morgan LLP  
1001 Second St.  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Felicia M. Brooks, Data Administrator  
[fbrooks@ndnlaw.com](mailto:fbrooks@ndnlaw.com)  
Ross D. Colburn, Law Clerk  
[rcolburn@ndnlaw.com](mailto:rcolburn@ndnlaw.com)  
Sally Eredia, Legal Secretary  
[seredia@ndnlaw.com](mailto:seredia@ndnlaw.com)  
Darcie L. Houck, Esq.  
[dhouck@ndnlaw.com](mailto:dhouck@ndnlaw.com)  
Brian Niegemann, Office Manager  
[bniegemann@ndnlaw.com](mailto:bniegemann@ndnlaw.com)  
John M. Peebles, Esq.  
[jpeebles@ndnlaw.com](mailto:jpeebles@ndnlaw.com)  
Robert Rhoan, Esq.  
[rrhoan@ndnlaw.com](mailto:rrhoan@ndnlaw.com)  
Shane Thin Elk, Esq.  
[sthinelk@ndnlaw.com](mailto:sthinelk@ndnlaw.com)

Counsel for Joint Timbisha Shoshone Tribal Group  
Godfrey & Kahn, S.C.  
One East Main Street, Suite 500  
P. O. Box 2719  
Madison, WI 53701-2719  
Julie Dobie, Legal Secretary  
[jdobie@gklaw.com](mailto:jdobie@gklaw.com)  
Steven A. Heinzen, Esq.  
[sheinzen@gklaw.com](mailto:sheinzen@gklaw.com)  
Douglas M. Poland, Esq.  
[dpoland@gklaw.com](mailto:dpoland@gklaw.com)  
Hannah L. Renfro, Esq.  
[hrenfro@gklaw.com](mailto:hrenfro@gklaw.com)  
Jacqueline Schwartz, Paralegal  
[jschwartz@gklaw.com](mailto:jschwartz@gklaw.com)

Counsel for Joint Timbisha Shoshone Tribal Group  
Godfrey & Kahn, S.C.  
780 N. Water Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
Arthur J. Harrington, Esq.  
[aharrington@gklaw.com](mailto:aharrington@gklaw.com)

[ Original Signed by Linda D. Lewis ]  
Office of the Secretary of the Commission

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