

Maine Yankee Community Advisory Panel on Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage & Removal - Yankee Rowe Spent Fuel Storage & Removal Community Advisory Board - Connecticut Yankee Fuel Storage Advisory Committee - Vermont Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel

November 16, 2015

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

We represent the four New England community advisory groups for the former nuclear power plant sites in our communities that continue to store spent nuclear fuel (SNF) and high-level radioactive waste (HLW) because the federal government has failed to meet its contractual and statutory obligations under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to remove this material beginning in 1998 from Maine Yankee, Connecticut Yankee, Yankee Rowe, and Vermont Yankee. The ratepayers of New England have paid for the removal and disposal of the SNF/HLW and have received nothing in return. We are writing to you and other members of the New England delegation urging meaningful action in this session of Congress to overcome the national nuclear waste management policy impasse. Indefinite on-site storage of this material stranded in the communities we live and work in is unacceptable.

We believe that the federal government can meet its obligation in the nearer term by implementing a pilot consolidated interim storage project focused initially on the removal of SNF from sites without an operating reactor as has been proposed in the Senate's Nuclear Waste Administration Act of 2015 (S. 854), the Senate's FY-2016 Energy & Water Development Appropriations bill (H.R. 2028), and the Interim Consolidated Storage Act of 2015 (H.R. 3643) that was recently introduced in the House. The pilot concept has bipartisan support; was a recommendation of the 2012 President's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future; and is a milestone in the Department of Energy's 2013 report, "Strategy for the Management and Disposal of Used Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste".

Consolidating SNF from the shutdown reactor sites would return these sites to productive use in the host communities, make the storage and security of this material more efficient, more cost effective, and arguably more safe, while ending the federal government's increasing liability at these sites. We are encouraged by news of the two entities in Texas and New Mexico proposing to license, construct and operate consolidated interim storage facilities in volunteer host communities with plans to be operational in the 2020 timeframe. We strongly urge your support of legislation that directs DOE to engage with entities and communities interested in storing the SNF/HLW from our sites on an interim basis. Progress toward a repository must also occur, but not at the expense of addressing the needs of our communities that could be achieved in the nearer term.

We are counting on your leadership to resolve this critical community issue and await your reply.

Sincerely,



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