

**Monthly Status Report to Congress  
Activities Related to the Yucca Mountain Licensing Action  
Report November 2013**

**Background**

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is an independent regulatory agency whose mission is to license and regulate the Nation's civilian use of radioactive materials, to protect public health and safety, to promote the common defense and security, and to protect the environment. Under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is responsible for developing and submitting to the NRC a license application for the construction of a geologic repository for high-level waste at Yucca Mountain, in Nye County, Nevada. The NRC is responsible for reviewing the application and determining whether to issue a construction authorization to the DOE. The DOE submitted its license application to the NRC on June 3, 2008, and the NRC accepted the application for review on September 8, 2008. The focus of the NRC's review is on whether the DOE has demonstrated that it can construct and operate a repository safely and in compliance with NRC regulations.

On March 3, 2010, the DOE filed a motion to withdraw its license application, which the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board denied on June 29, 2010. The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board suspended the adjudicatory proceeding on September 30, 2011.

On August 13, 2013, a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit issued its decision directing the NRC to "promptly continue with the legally mandated licensing process" for the DOE's application to construct a geologic repository for high-level waste at Yucca Mountain.

**Activities**

During the month of November, the Commission staff continued to provide legal advice to the Commission concerning the preparation of an adjudicatory decision identifying a path forward for the licensing process. On November 18, 2013, the Commission<sup>1</sup> issued a Staff Requirements Memorandum and a Memorandum and Order, which set a course of action for the Yucca Mountain licensing process, consistent with the decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in *In re Aiken County*, and with the resources available. The Order directed the NRC staff to complete and issue the Safety Evaluation Report (SER) associated with the construction authorization application and requested that the U.S. Department of Energy prepare the supplemental environmental impact statement (EIS) that the NRC staff has determined is needed for purposes of the review of this application under the National Environmental Policy Act. The Order continued to hold the adjudication in abeyance. The Order declined to direct the staff to reconstitute the Licensing Support Network (LSN) but did direct that all documents be loaded into the non-public version of the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) (our electronic database) promptly and acknowledged that documents used as references in the SER and EIS supplement will be made publicly available. Finally, the Order granted in part and denied in part requests for relief filed by Nye County and the State of Nevada, and declined to decide at this time the Timbisha

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<sup>1</sup> Commissioner Apostolakis did not participate in this matter.

Shoshone Tribal Council's renewed motion for recognition. The staff is working to implement the Commission's direction with a project plan due in December 2013.

### **Nuclear Waste Fund Expenditures**

During this period, the NRC incurred additional obligations of \$6,821 of Nuclear Waste Funds on its actions in direct response to the court's decision, including \$3,990 for responding to the Commission's August 30, 2013, Order and \$2,831 for Federal Court litigations costs. Cumulative obligations since the August 13, 2013, U.S. Court of Appeals decision are \$151,226, including \$125,419 for responding to the Commission's August 30, 2013, Order and \$25,807 for Federal Court litigations costs. Total unobligated Nuclear Waste Funds remaining as of November 30, 2013, are \$10,904,799.

Beginning with the December report, the NRC will separately identify obligations incurred for completion of the SER, loading of LSN documents into ADAMS, adoption of the supplemental EIS, and overall project management.

As noted in last month's report, \$2,493,290 of previously appropriated Nuclear Waste Funds remain unexpended but obligated on contracts with the NRC-sponsored Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses (CNWRA). The NRC continues to take actions to deobligate these funds.