

YUCCA MOUNTAIN TASK FORCE

**For Immediate Release:
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Statement regarding the revised Yucca Mountain schedule outlined by OCRWM Director Ward Sproat today at the House Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality hearing

Statement by the Yucca Mountain Task Force

The Department of Energy's revised Yucca Mountain schedule is a sober step in the right direction toward meeting the Federal Government's longstanding commitment to U.S. electricity consumers and utilities, who have invested \$28 billion in this program including interest.

This concrete action occurs at an extremely critical time for the program in light of recent Senate Appropriations Committee maneuvering that could lead to the Department of Energy attempting to site, design, construct and operate a fleet of interim storage facilities across the U.S. It also provides some reassurance with regard to the Bush Administration's resolve to move this program forward, given Yucca Mountain's importance to potential new nuclear power plants in states that choose this energy option as well as to national and energy security.

The DOE's plan to centralize management of spent fuel and high-level waste at one national facility in less than 11 years clearly stands in stark contrast to the Senate Appropriations plan to store this material at up to 31 sites for 25 years at the expense of ratepayers in 41 states.

The revised schedule also underscores the need for expeditious enactment of the pending Nuclear Fuel Management and Disposal Act, particularly funding reform. We encourage a continued dialog and focus on this legislation -- and the tremendous costs and implications of inaction -- in the balance of this Congress.

We commend the House Energy and Commerce Committee's focus to this end and Director Sproat's initiative to lay out this blueprint for action.

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The YMTF is a joint bipartisan national initiative of the Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition, U.S. Transport Council, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Prairie Island Community Council, Decommissioning Plant Coalition, and other organizations that collectively represent state regulatory authorities, nuclear utilities, and businesses with principal operations throughout the United States.

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