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October 5, 2001

The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20585-0001

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As you know, the state of Alabama and the rest of our nation still face a critical need to permanently dispose of used fuel from nuclear energy plants. Although significant scientific results have been achieved, past delays have delayed the federal repository program by more than a decade. More than 20 years and \$7 billion have been spent in detailed scientific and engineering studies to ensure that the permanent repository at Yucca Mountain, authorized by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, will protect public and worker safety and health.

Since 1983, the electricity consumers of my state have paid more than \$761 million to the Nuclear Waste Fund for permanent disposal of used nuclear fuel. Currently, 2,033 metric tons of used nuclear fuel is being stored at power reactors in Alabama. Nuclear power accounts for 25.3 percent of electricity generation in Alabama and plays a key role in maintaining reasonable electricity rates and reliable service for Alabama consumers. Inaction on the part of the federal government could jeopardize the continued use of nuclear energy, a key component in maintaining a diverse energy supply.

With the completion of the Preliminary Site Suitability Evaluation, there is a second ^(sound) scientific basis for the Department of Energy to proceed expeditiously with the development of a federal repository. International scientific consensus supports geologic disposal as the safest and most reliable method currently available for the disposal of used nuclear fuel. As governor, I again strongly urge you to recommend Yucca Mountain as the repository site.

With gratitude and best regards, I am ...

Sincerely,

Don Siegelman
Governor

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cc: Ms. Carol Hanlon