

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

BEFORE THE COMMISSION

_____)	Docket No. 63-001-HLW
In the Matter of)	
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY)	
(License Application for Geologic)	
Repository at Yucca Mountain))	December 9, 2013
_____)	

**FIVE PARTIES' ANSWER TO NEVADA'S PETITION FOR CLARIFICATION OF
RESTART ORDER AND STAFF REQUIREMENTS MEMORANDUM**

Nye County, Nevada, the State of South Carolina, the State of Washington, Aiken County, South Carolina, and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (collectively the "Five Parties") hereby respond to the State of Nevada's November 27, 2013 Petition for Clarification of November 18, 2013 Restart Order and Related Staff Requirements Memorandum ("Nevada Petition for Clarification").

The Five Parties concur with the Staff Requirements Memorandum's (associated with SECY-13-0113) ("SRM") direction that Staff should "adopt work previously completed as a first principle, to the maximum extent possible, and should undertake original investigation or inquiry only as necessary to account or adjust for new information." The Five Parties believe that nothing in the SRM directs Staff to contravene NRC rules governing the proper staff review procedures that may apply to work already accomplished before the licensing proceeding was illegally suspended in 2011. The Five Parties already acknowledged that adopting previously completed work (even to the maximum extent possible) on one or more SERs could include

additional staff review if required.¹ Therefore, the Five Parties do not believe clarification of the SRM is necessary, since nothing in the SRM suggested that NRC rules could be circumvented during completion of the SERs.

Nevada notes that “insofar as Nevada is aware, NRC Staff management and Office of General Counsel (‘OGC’) review of any drafts of the SER was not completed when work on the SER was suspended in the fall of 2011.” Nevada Petition for Clarification at 4. The Five Parties are similarly unaware of the status of the staff review, and that is among the reasons why the Five Parties’ Motion for Reconsideration requests modification to NRC’s Order to provide additional information on the status of the SERs.² Furthermore, while some of the Staff’s technical work in developing the SERs and related Technical Evaluation Reports (“TERs”) **may** require additional review to become approved SERs, all Staff Management Reviews and OGC reviews of SERs that had been completed prior to the illegal suspension of the licensing proceedings can and should be used to the maximum extent possible in order to preserve scarce appropriated funds. Contrary to what Nevada implies,³ a number of previously developed SERs were “uncompleted” by simply stripping the SERs of their safety conclusions and improperly converting them into TERs. See *In re Aiken County*, 725 F.3d 255, 268 (D.C. Cir. 2013); Nye County’s Motion for Lifting of Suspension of Yucca Mountain Licensing Proceeding, Scheduling of Immediate Case Management Conference, and Issuance of Related Administrative Orders at *16, *In re U.S. Dep’t of Energy*, NRC No. 63-001-HLW (Aug. 23, 2013). Thus, if necessary staff and legal reviews were completed before those safety conclusions were removed, the SER(s) can and should be issued without wasting further funds.

The Five Parties do not interpret the SRM to preclude the use of the technical analyses or staff management reviews accomplished (or “completed”) prior to the illegal suspension of

¹ See *Motion for Reconsideration of Memorandum and Order* at 3, n. 4 (Nov. 27, 2013) (“Five Parties’ Motion for Reconsideration”).

² See *generally* Motion for Reconsideration.

³ Nevada Petition at 4.

the licensing process that led to the issuance of the writ of mandamus in *In re Aiken County*, 725 F.3d 255 (D.C. Cir. 2013). According to Nevada, “work is not considered ‘completed’ unless the Staff management and OGC review required by internal Staff practice and procedure was completed.” *Id.* Thus, Nevada’s Petition could theoretically be interpreted as restricting the Staff from adopting previous technical work or internal reviews that had not received **final** Staff management and OGC review by the time the former Chairman improperly suspended the licensing proceeding. Out of an abundance of caution, the Five Parties want to make clear that the Commission should obviously reject any such restrictions. Requiring Staff to ignore such technical work and reviews is not required by NRC rules, would be a significant waste of resources, and would be inconsistent with the Court’s decision in *In re Aiken County*, 725 F.3d 255 (D.C. Cir. 2013), *request for rehearing en banc denied on Oct. 28, 2013*.

Respectfully Submitted this 9th day of December, 2013

/Signed (electronically) by/

Robert M. Andersen
Email: randers@clarkhill.com
Christopher B. Clare
Email: cclare@clarkhill.com

Clark Hill PLC
601 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
North Building, Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20004
Counsel for Nye County, Nevada

/Signed (electronically) by/

Kenneth P. Woodington
Email: kwoodington@dml-law.com

Davidson & Lindemann, P.A.
1611 Devonshire Drive
P.O. Box 8568
Columbia, SC 29202
Counsel for State of South Carolina

/Signed (electronically) by/

James Bradford Ramsay

Email: jramsay@naruc.org
1101 Vermont Ave. NW
Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20005
**Counsel for National Association of
Regulatory Utility Commissioners**

/Signed (electronically) by/

Todd R. Bowers
Email: toddb@atg.wa.gov
Andrew A. Fitz
Email: andyf@atg.wa.gov

State of Washington
Office of the Attorney General
P.O. Box 40117
Olympia, WA 98504-0117
Counsel for State of Washington

/Signed (electronically) by/

Thomas R. Gottshall
Email: tgottshall@hsblawfirm.com
S. Ross Shealy
Email: rshealy@hsblawfirm.com

Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, P.A.
1201 Main Street, Suite 2200
P.O. Box 11889
Columbia, SC 29211-1189
**Counsel for Aiken County, South
Carolina**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the Five Parties' "Answer to Nevada's Petition for Clarification of Restart Order and Staff Requirements Memorandum" in the above-captioned proceeding has been served on the following this 9th day of December, 2013, by Electronic Information Exchange.

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

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of the General Counsel
Mail Stop O-15D21
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Construction Authorization Board 04

Thomas S. Moore, Chair
Administrative Judge
thomas.moore@nrc.gov

Paul S. Ryerson Administrative Judge
paul.ryerson@nrc.gov

Richard E. Wardwell Administrative Judge
richard.wardwell@nrc.gov

Anthony C. Eitrem, Esq., Chief Counsel
anthony.eitrem@nrc.gov

Carter Thurman, Law Clerk
carter.thurman@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

Jessica Bielecki, [Esq. jessica.bielecki@nrc.gov](mailto:jessica.bielecki@nrc.gov)
Joseph S. Gilman, [Esq. joseph.gilman@nrc.gov](mailto:joseph.gilman@nrc.gov)
Daniel W. Lenehan, [Esq. daniel.lenehan@nrc.gov](mailto:daniel.lenehan@nrc.gov)
Megan A. Wright, [Esq. megan.wright@nrc.gov](mailto:megan.wright@nrc.gov)
Mitzi A. Young, [Esq. mitzi.young@nrc.gov](mailto:mitzi.young@nrc.gov)
Shelbie Lewman, [Esq. shelbie.lewman@nrc.gov](mailto:shelbie.lewman@nrc.gov)

OGC Mail Center
OGCMailCenter@nrc.gov

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Commission Appellate Adjudication
Mail Stop O-7H4M
Washington, DC 20555-0001
OCAA Mail Center
ocaamail@nrc.gov

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
Nicholas P. DiNunzio, Esq.
nick.dinunzio@rw.doe.gov
James Bennett McRae
ben.mcrae@hq.doe.gov
Cyrus Nezhad, Esq.
cyrus.nezhad@hq.doe.gov
Christina C. Pak, Esq.
christina.pak@hq.doe.gov

Office of Counsel, Naval Sea Systems
Command, Nuclear Propulsion Program
1333 Isaac Hull Ave., SE, Building 197
Washington, DC 20376
Frank A. Putzu, Esq.
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

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
Donald P. Irwin, Esq.
dirwin@hunton.com
Stephanie Meharg, Paralegal
smeharg@hunton.com
Michael R. Shebelskie, Esq.
mshebelskie@hunton.com
Belinda A. Wright, Sr. Professional Assistant
bwright@hunton.com

Counsel for U.S. Department of Energy
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP
1111 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004

Lewis M. Csedrik, Esq.
lcsedrik@morganlewis.com
Raphael P. Kuyler, Esq.
rkuyler@morganlewis.com
Charles B. Moldenhauer, Esq.
cmoldenhauer@morganlewis.com
Thomas D. Poindexter, Esq.
tpoindexter@morganlewis.com
Alex S. Polonsky, Esq.
apolonsky@morganlewis.com
Thomas A. Schmutz, Esq.
tschmutz@morganlewis.com
Donald J. Silverman, Esq.
dsilverman@morganlewis.com
Paul J. Zaffuts, Esq.
pzaffuts@morganlewis.com
Shannon Staton, Legal Secretary
sstaton@morganlewis.com
Elaine M. Hirsch, Legal Secretary
ehirsch@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
Susan Montesi:
smontesi@nuclearlawyer.com

Counsel for State of Nevada
Egan, Fitzpatrick, Malsch & Lawrence,
PLLC
San Antonio, TX 78217

Charles J. Fitzpatrick, Esq.
cfitzpatrick@nuclearlawyer.com
John W. Lawrence, Esq.
jlawrence@nuclearlawyer.com
Laurie Borski, Paralegal
lborski@nuclearlawyer.com

Bureau of Government Affairs
Nevada Attorney General
100 N. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701
Marta Adams, Deputy Attorney General
madams@ag.nv.gov

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
Susan Lynch, Administrator of Tech. Prgms
szeeee@nuc.state.nv.us

Nye County Regulatory/Licensing Advisor
18160 Cottonwood Rd. #265
Sunriver, OR 97707

Malachy Murphy, Esq.
mrmurphy@chamberscable.com

Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository
Project Office
2101 E. Calvada Boulevard, Suite 100
Pahrump, NV 89048

Celeste Sandoval, Q.A. Records
Spec.csandoval@co.nye.nv.us

Counsel for Lincoln County, Nevada
Whipple Law Firm
1100 S. Tenth Street
Las Vegas, NV 89017

Annie Bailey, Legal Assistant
baileys@lcturbonet.com
Adam L. Gill, Esq.
adam.whipplelaw@yahoo.com
Eric Hinckley, Law Clerk
erichinckley@yahoo.com
Bret Whipple, Esq.
bretwhipple@nomademail.com

Lincoln County District Attorney
P. O. Box 60
Pioche, NV 89403

Gregory Barlow, Esq.
lcta@lcturbonet.com

Lincoln County Nuclear Oversight Program
P.O. Box 1068
Caliente, NV 89008
Connie Simkins, Coordinator
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

Counsel for Nye, County, Nevada
601 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
North Building, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004

Robert Andersen, Esq.
randersen@clarkhill.com
Christopher Clare, Esq.
cclare@clarkhill.com

Clark County, Nevada
500 S. Grand Central Parkway
Las Vegas, NV 98155

Phil Klevorick, Sr. Mgmt Analyst
klevorick@clarkcountynv.gov
Elizabeth A. Vibert, Deputy District Attorney
Elizabeth.Vibert@ccdandv.com

Counsel for Eureka County, Nevada
Harmon, Curran, Speilberg & Eisenberg,
LLP
1726 M. Street N.W., Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036

Diane Curran, Esq.
dcurran@harmoncurran.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

Nuclear Waste Advisory for Eureka
County, Nevada
1983 Maison Way
Carson City, NV 89703

Abigail Johnson, Consultant
eurekanrc@gmail.com

For White Pine County, Nevada
Intertech Services Corporation
PO Box 2008
Carson City, NV 89702

Mike Baughman, Consultant
mikebaughman@charter.net

For Eureka County, Nevada
NWOP Consulting, Inc.
1705 Wildcat Lane
Ogden, UT 84403

Loreen Pitchford, Consultant
lpitchford@comcast.net

Eureka County Public Works
PO Box 714
Eureka, NV 89316

Ronald Damele, Director
rdamele@eurekanv.org

Counsel for Churchill, Esmeralda, Lander,
and Mineral Counties, Nevada

Armstrong Teasdale, LLP
1975 Village Center Circle, Suite 140
Las Vegas, NV 89134-6237

Tara Baugh
tbaugh@armstrongteasdale.com

Kolesar & Leatham
1975 Village Center Circle, Suite 140
Las Vegas, NV 89134

Robert F. List, Esq.
rlist@knevada.com

Esmeralda County Repository Oversight
Program-Yucca Mountain Project
PO Box 490
Goldfield, NV 89013

Edwin Mueller, Director
muellered@msn.com

Mineral County Nuclear Projects Office
P.O. Box 1600
Hawthorne, NV 89415

Linda Mathias, Director
yuccainfo@mineralcountynv.org

For Lincoln and White Pine County, Nevada
Jason Pitts, LSN Administrator
P.O. Box 126
Caliente, NV 89008
jayson@idtservices.com

For White Pine County, Nevada
Kelly Brown, District Attorney
801 Clark Street, Suite 3 Ely, NV 89301
kbrown@mwpower.net

White Pine Co. Nuclear Waste Project Ofc
959 Campton Street Ely, NV 89301
Mike Simon, Director
wpnucwst1@mwpower.net

Counsel for Inyo County, California
Gregory L. James, Attorney at Law
712 Owens Gorge Road
HC 79, Box
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
[E-Mail: gljames@earthlink.net](mailto:gljames@earthlink.net)

Counsel for Inyo County, California
Law Office of Michael Berger
479 El Sueno Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Michael Berger, Esq.
michael@lawofficeofmichaelberger.com
Robert Hanna, Esq.
robert@lawofficeofmichaelberger.com

Inyo County Yucca Mountain Repository
Assessment Office
P. O. Box 367
Independence, CA 93526-0367

Cathreen Richards, Associate Planner
crichards@inyocounty.us

Counsel for State of Washington
Office of the Attorney General
P. O. Box 40117
Olympia, WA 98504-0117

Todd R. Bowers, Esq.
toddb@atg.wa.gov
Andrew A. Fitz, Esq.
andyf@atg.wa.gov
Michael L. Dunning, Esq.
michaeld@atg.wa.gov
H. Lee Overton, Esq.
leo1@atg.wa.gov
Danielle French, Esq.
daniellef@atg.wa.gov

California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Kevin, W. Bell, Senior Staff Counsel
kwbell@energy.state.ca.us

California Department of Justice
Office of the Attorney General
1300 I Street, PO Box 944255
Sacramento, CA 94244-2550

Michele Mercado, Analyst
michele.Mercado@doj.ca.gov

California Department of Justice
Office of the Attorney General
1515 Clay Street, 20th Fl, PO Box 70550
Oakland, CA 94612-0550

Timothy E. Sullivan, Deputy Atty. Gen.
timothy.Sullivan@doj.ca.gov

California Department of Justice
Office of the Attorney General
300 S. Spring Street, Suite 1702
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Brian Hembacher, Deputy Attorney General
brian.hembacher@doj.ca.gov

Counsel for State of South Carolina
Davidson & Lindemann, P.A.
1611 Devonshire Drive
P.O. Box 8568
Columbia, SC 29202

Kenneth P. Woodington, Esq.
kwoodington@dml-law.com

Counsel for Aiken County, SC
Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, PA
1201 Main Street, Suite 2200
P. O. Box 11889
Columbia, SC 29211-1889

Thomas R. Gottshall, Esq.
tgottshall@hsblawfirm.com
Ross Shealy, Esq.
rshealy@hsblawfirm.com

Florida Public Service Commission
Office of the General Counsel
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Cynthia Miller, Esq.
cmiller@psc.state.fl.us

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
Rovianne A. Leigh, Esq.
rleigh@abwwlaw.com
Scott W. Williams, Esq.
swilliams@abwwlaw.com

Native Community Action Council
P.O. Box 140
Baker, NV 89311

Ian Zabarte, Member of Board of Directors
mrizabarte@gmail.com

Counsel for Prairie Island Indian Community
Public Law Resource Center PLLC
505 N. Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48933

Don L. Keskey, Esq.
donkeskey@publiclawresourcecenter.com

Prairie Island Indian Community Legal
Department
5636 Sturgeon Lake Road
Welch, MN 55089
Philip R. Mahowald, Esq.

Nuclear Energy Institute
Office of the General Counsel
1776 I Street, NW Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006-3708

Jerry Bonanno, Esq.
jxb@nei.org
Anne W. Cottingham, Esq.
awc@nei.org
Ellen C. Ginsberg, Esq.
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
Timothy J.V. Walsh, Esq.
timothy.walsh@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
Rachel Miras-Wilson, Esq.
rwilson@winston.com
David A. Repka, Esq.
drepka@winston.com
Carlos L. Sisco, Senior Paralegal
csisco@winston.com

Counsel for National Association of
Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC)
1101 Vermont Avenue, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005

James Ramsay, Esq.
jramsay@naruc.org
Robin Lunt, Esq.
rlunt@naruc.org

For Joint Timbisha Shoshone Tribal Group
Indian Village Road, P.O. Box 206
Death Valley, CA 92328-0206

Joe Kennedy, Executive Director
joekennedy08@live.com
Tameka Vazquez, Bookkeeper
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
Ross D. Colburn, Law Clerk
rcolburn@ndnlaw.com
Sally Eredia, Legal Secretary
seredia@ndnlaw.com
Darcie L. Houck, Esq.
dhouck@ndnlaw.com
Brian Niegemann, Office Manager
bniegemann@ndnlaw.com
John M. Peebles, Esq.
jpeebles@ndnlaw.com
Robert Rhoan, Esq.
rrhoan@ndnlaw.com

Fredericks, Peebles, & Morgan LLP
3610 North 163rd Plaza
Omaha, NE 68116

Shane Thin Elk, Esq.
sthinelk@ndnlaw.com

Signed (electronically) by/

Robert M. Andersen
Counsel for Nye County, Nevada
Clark Hill PLC
601 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
North Building, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 772-0924
[E-mail: randersen@clarkhill.](mailto:randersen@clarkhill)

December 9, 2013