

**STATEMENT OF GREGORY H. FRIEDMAN
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

BEFORE THE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE AND AGENCY ORGANIZATION

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY

10:00 a.m., Tuesday, April 5, 2005

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to be here today to testify regarding recent allegations of misconduct involving documents associated with the U.S. Department of Energy's Yucca Mountain Project.

Disposal of the Nation's high-level nuclear waste and spent nuclear fuel is one of the most sensitive and complex challenges facing the U.S. Government. Under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, as amended in 1987, the Yucca Mountain site in the State of Nevada is the only site in the United States to be evaluated for this purpose. The Act established a formal, step-by-step methodology for making this evaluation. For the State of Nevada and all other interested parties, the process to evaluate Yucca Mountain as the potential repository has enormous implications. Paramount among concerns expressed is that the consideration and evaluation be objective, and based on sound scientific analysis. Public confidence in the evaluation and licensing process must also be assured.

On March 14, 2005, we became aware of allegations concerning possible falsification of records relating to aspects of the scientific assessment of Yucca Mountain. We assembled a team of highly qualified Special Agents and commenced a criminal investigation to gather the relevant facts. We have been working jointly with the Department of Interior's Office of Inspector General and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Since this is a criminal case, we are in regular consultation with the United States Attorney's Office in Nevada.

Our plan is to conduct comprehensive interviews of Federal and contractor personnel and analyze the extensive documentary record surrounding this matter. We have dedicated the resources necessary to ensure an independent, objective, and thorough investigation.

We will follow the facts wherever they may lead. Because of the nature of the allegations and the importance of the Yucca Mountain Project, we will proceed as expeditiously as possible.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, this concludes my statement. I will be pleased to answer any questions.