

# HISTORY OF NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT

## DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR POWER

- 1934 Enrico Fermi splits the atom; achieves world's first nuclear fission
- 1942 Manhattan project forms, build atomic bomb for use in World War II
- 1945 U.S. produces first nuclear weapons
- 1953 U.S. launches first nuclear-powered submarine, the U.S.S. Nautilus
- 1954 Congress passes Atomic Energy Act of 1954, providing direction for the peaceful use of atomic energy
- 1955 U.S. begins using nuclear power to generate electricity

As a nation, we have been studying nuclear waste management and geologic disposal for decades. Geologic disposal is widely accepted by experts nationally and internationally as the safe, responsible solution.

## DEVELOPMENT OF GEOLOGIC DISPOSAL

- 1957 National Academy of Sciences recommends geologic disposal for disposing of nuclear waste
- 1970 U.S. begins search for potential repository sites
- 1970 Lyons, Kansas site selected as the first national repository
- 1972 Government withdraws from operations at Lyons site due to technical uncertainties and public opposition

## NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT AND YUCCA MOUNTAIN

- 1982 Congress passes NWPA, establishing the process for selecting a disposal site
- 1986 DOE recommends 3 sites for further study, including Yucca Mountain
- 1987 Congress amends NWPA, directing DOE to study only Yucca Mountain
- 1988-2002 DOE studies Yucca Mountain extensively
- 1998 DOE misses deadline to begin accepting spent nuclear fuel
- February 2002 DOE recommends Yucca Mountain as the nation's first disposal site and President Bush submits recommendation to Congress
- April 2002 Nevada Governor Guinn submits notice of disapproval to Congress
- July 2002 President Bush signs joint resolution approving Yucca Mountain
- 2008 DOE submits license application for construction of repository to NRC
- 2009 Administration determines Yucca Mountain is not a workable solution and DOE suspends activities at the site

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA) provides the basic policy framework for U.S. efforts to manage nuclear waste. The Act establishes the procedures for evaluating and selecting sites for geologic repositories and sets key milestones for federal agencies, including the Department of Energy, to meet in implementing the policy.

## BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION AND CONSENT-BASED SITING

- 2010 Secretary of Energy Chu establishes the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future (BRC)
- 2012 BRC recommends DOE adopt a consent-based approach to siting nuclear waste facilities
- 2013 DOE releases *Strategy for the Management and Disposal of Used Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste*
- 2015 Secretary of Energy Moniz announces DOE will pursue consent-based approach to siting facilities for interim storage and disposal

The Administration issued the 2013 Strategy for the Management and Disposal of Used Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste, which applies the principles of the Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations to a framework for a sustainable program to manage our nation's nuclear waste.

