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10 September 2001

Lake H. Barrett, Acting Director
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
Department of Energy
Washington, D. C. 20585

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Dear Mr. Barrett:

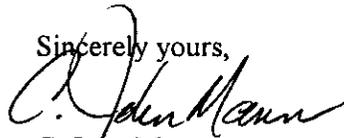
I am pleased to respond to your request for input to possible site recommendation of Yucca Mountain. Having participated in groundwater safety studies of the Nevada Test Site (NTS) nearly four decades ago and more recently serving on the Peer Review Panel for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, I am quite familiar with the geology of NTS, Yucca Mountain, and Amargosa Valley, as well as geologic repositories for nuclear waste worldwide. I consider the Yucca Mountain Preliminary Site Suitability Evaluation, along with other published scientific work, an adequate basis for judging Yucca Mountain to be a suitable site for a nuclear waste repository.

I strongly recommend that Secretary Spencer Abraham proceed expeditiously on this matter, if he determines that Yucca Mountain scientifically meets the standard that has been established, as I think he will, with a recommendation to President Bush.

One can never be absolutely certain when probabilistic criteria are used for predicting future safety, as it correctly should be, but Yucca Mountain is an excellent site and probability is small that it will fail during the next 10,000 to 100,000 years. United States has many potentially excellent repositories for nuclear waste disposal, however, I know of only one that I would rate superior to Yucca Mountain.

A permanent solution to disposal of civilian nuclear waste is badly needed and long overdue. Temporary storage of nuclear waste at nuclear power plants is far more risky than permanent disposal in most potential geologic repositories. Once Yucca Mountain is opened for permanent storage of civilian wastes, DOE should immediately select a second site in Eastern United States so that temporary storage is never again necessary.

Sincerely yours,



C. John Mann
Emeritus Professor of Geology