



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

December 22, 2015

The Honorable Scott Peters
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Peters:

Thank you for your September 21 letter regarding spent nuclear fuel (SNF) currently stored at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) in California.

In an effort to develop both interim and final solutions for the Nation's SNF and high-level radioactive waste, the Department of Energy (DOE) is implementing the Administration's 2013 Strategy for the Management and Disposal of Used Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste, which built upon the core recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future. Important components of the Strategy are a pilot-scale interim storage facility with an initial focus on accepting SNF from shutdown reactor sites, a larger-scale interim storage facility for SNF, and a geologic repository for SNF and high-level radioactive waste. All to be developed utilizing a phased, adaptive and consent-based siting approach.

This week, DOE launched an initiative to begin the development of a consent-based siting approach and create a sustainable solution for managing our Nation's nuclear waste. The Department is issuing an invitation for Public Comment in the Federal Register, expected to be published on December 23, soliciting input on important considerations in designing a fair and effective siting process. As part of this effort, the Department plans to host a series of public meetings around the country in 2016 to hear from the public and stakeholders on important principles, values, and considerations that should guide our thinking as we begin designing a consent-based siting process. We encourage you to participate as we work with the Nation to develop this important approach.

As stated above, DOE's plans for the pilot-scale interim storage facility focus on giving priority to accepting SNF from shutdown reactor sites, such as SONGS. Though the Department is conducting activities to lay the groundwork for interim storage, the Department would await new statutory authority before constructing such a facility.

To support the eventual removal of SNF from shutdown reactor sites, DOE is continuing to evaluate the transportation infrastructure and associated operational considerations at shutdown reactor sites to facilitate eventual removal of SNF. To date, 12 of the 13 shutdown nuclear facilities have been visited by DOE staff. As part of this effort to analyze and document on-the-ground conditions at shutdown power plants, in June 2015,



a delegation of DOE scientists and engineers, including Acting Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy, John F. Kotek, visited the SONGS site. The Southern California Edison team that hosted their visit was well prepared and provided an extensive amount of very useful information which will be incorporated into DOE's technical documentation.

The Department has not used money from the Nuclear Waste Fund (NWF) for the planning activities described above because Congress has not appropriated funds from the NWF for these activities.

Thank you for your interest in the Department of Energy's ongoing efforts to develop storage and disposal solutions for our Nation's SNF and high-level radioactive waste. I look forward to working with you on this important issue. If you need additional information, please contact me or Ms. Janine Benner, Deputy Assistant Secretary for House Affairs, at (202) 586-5450.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ernest J. Moniz', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ernest J. Moniz