

WM2012 Conference Panel Report

PANEL SESSION 95: The Future of the US DOE Yucca Mountain Site and Discussion of the Alternatives

Co-Chairs: Paul Dickman, *Argonne National Laboratory*
Glenn Paulson, *Paulson and Cooper*

Panel Reporter: Eric K. Knox, *URS Corporation*

Panelists:

1. Ed Davis, *President, Pegasus Group International*
2. Michael Voegele, *Consultant to Nye County, Nevada*
3. Amy Roma, *Hogan Lovells, LLC*
4. The Hon. Bob Forrest, *Former Mayor, Carlsbad, NM*

More than 110 people attended this session that focused on current issues surrounding the uncertain future of nuclear waste disposal policy in America. Each of the panelists made 15 minute presentations followed immediately by a brief question and answer session. Two of the panelists made formal remarks without any supporting media presentations and two made formal remarks supported by PowerPoint presentations. Three to four questions were asked of each panelist following their presentation and an additional eight questions were asked during the panel discussion at the conclusion of all presentations.

Audience microphones were utilized for all questions.

The following is a brief summary of highlights of each panelist's remarks:

Ed Davis began the session by providing a summary of pro and con statements made following release of the Blue Ribbon Commission Final Report and concluded that the BRC changed few minds. Further, he stated that the BRC reaffirmed the national need for more than one repository. He also posited that as we consider alternatives, Nuclear Waste Fund (NWF) monies should go to the State(s) willing to host the repository since giving it to the Federal government the past 30 years has not worked. He also proposed indexing the NWF for inflation and offering the roughly \$3 billion owed as one time fees to willing hosts as an incentive.

Michael Voegele offered that Nye County Nevada is neither for nor against Yucca Mountain, rather they support completing the license application review process. He cited a poll from this past weekend from the Reno Gazette which indicated 80% of Nevadans who responded support negotiating for benefits for Yucca Mountain and 20% opposed it. He also supported the need for two repositories. In addition to moving forward with a repository at Yucca Mountain he also supports moving forward with WIPP and provided detail as to difficulties and obstacles which would need to be overcome to move forward at WIPP.

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Amy Roma provided the best presentation I observed at this year's conference and I strongly recommend her for recognition as a best presenter at WM2012. She succinctly and effectively gave a detailed history of nuclear waste policy development in America, status of the current litigation surrounding alleged violations of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act and provided thought provoking insight as to the challenges facing any attempt to change or amend the current law and regulatory structure as it relates to nuclear Waste disposal. She also pointed out the favorable governments one day can change with the next election. New legislation is required unless Yucca Mountain is revived and maybe even if it is!

Bob Forrest offered a good presentation on the history of the development of WIPP citing all of the obstacles and opposition which had to be overcome to ultimately make the project a success. He recounted that in the early days no more than 25% of the local population supported the project and today the support is over 90%. He also believes that WIPP would make an excellent site for our national repository. He said the simplest way he could put it is Safe Site = Successful Site.

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