HQO.20051003.0001

Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

QA:NA

July 18, 2005

Dear Stakeholder:

This letter is to inform you that the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM) is adopting a policy to use dedicated trains for its usual shipments of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to the Yucca Mountain repository site in Nevada, when the repository is operational. A copy of this policy is enclosed.

We look forward to working with you on this and other issues such as routing, transportation operational planning, and implementation of Section 180(c) of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, as amended.

If you have any questions about this policy or other transportation issues currently under discussion, please contact Gary Lanthrum, Director, Office of National Transportation, at 202-586-4167.

Sincerely,

Paul M. Golan
Principal Deputy Director
Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management

Enclosure

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ENCLOSURE

QA: NA

Department of Energy Policy Statement for Use of Dedicated Trains for Waste Shipments to Yucca Mountain

POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Energy (DOE) will use dedicated train service (DTS) for its usual rail transport of spent nuclear fuel (SNF) and high-level radioactive waste (HLW) to the Yucca Mountain Repository site in Nevada when the repository is operational.

BACKGROUND

On April 8, 2004, the Department issued a record of decision on using rail as the preferred mode for transport of SNF and HLW to the repository. Using rail would result in fewer shipments than using trucks and would reduce environmental impacts. The term "dedicated train" refers to train service dedicated to one commodity (in this case, SNF and HLW). Past and current SNF shipping campaigns by DOE programs, including fuel from Three Mile Island and the West Valley Demonstration Project, the Foreign Research Reactor SNF Acceptance Program, and commercial campaigns, have used DTS.

DEDICATED TRAIN SERVICE BENEFITS

The benefits for the use of dedicated trains can be grouped into categories of safety, security, cost and operations.

Safety

SNF and HLW is shipped safely regardless of mode or type of service, primarily due to the stringent regulations in place and the robust nature of the transport packages involved. However, the radiological risk resulting from transport without incident may be lower due to decreased time in transit.

Security

DOE shipments have been and will continue to be made securely using both DTS and general freight service. Escort and other physical protection features can be employed using either type of service. DTS does offer some potential advantages, such as:

- Increased command and control capabilities. Shorter DTS trains allow better visual monitoring from the locomotive and escort car.

- Avoidance of lengthy "dwell times" in rail yards.

System Cost

Analyses indicate that the primary benefit of using DTS is the significant cost savings over the lifetime of the Yucca Mountain project. The cost of DTS is offset by a reduced fleet size and its attendant operations and maintenance.

Operations

The use of DTS will result in several benefits for repository and transportation operations.

- Transit and turnaround times will be shorter using DTS, enabling the repository to operate with fewer casks and fewer railcars (i.e., equipment will not sit idle in rail yards). In contrast, using general freight service would increase the required size of the cask and railcar fleet by about 40 percent due to the increased transit time associated with general freight service.

- Use of DTS provides greater operational flexibility and efficiency for the waste management system due to reduced time in transit, and greater predictability in routing and scheduling.

- Repository operational resources could be better managed by taking advantage of more predictable shipment and receipt schedules.

- Transportation planning and operations would be simplified by narrowing mode and type to mostly rail coupled with the use of DTS.

DISTRIBUTION LIST FOR
DEDICATED TRAIN POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT

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Called by Eric Knox on 7-11-05, follow-up by Allen Brownstein when Dear Stakeholder letters sent out. J. Holm will also call Mr. Duvall's staff, Deirdre K. Breithaupt.

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Communication Plan
Announcing DOE Decision to Use Dedicated Trains
For Waste Shipments to Yucca Mountain

Background

The attached decision memorandum documents the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) decision to use dedicated train service (DTS) for rail shipments of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to the Yucca Mountain repository. This decision provides increased operational control over these shipments and recognizes the consistent advocacy of stakeholder groups for the use of dedicated trains.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has submitted its report on Dedicated Train Safety to the Secretary of Transportation. Their conclusion is that dedicated trains provide a slight, but relatively insignificant, increase in safety (the number of latent cancer fatalities predicted per accident is less than one regardless of the type of train used).

Key Messages

In communicating the decision, it is recommended that certain key points be imparted to support using dedicated trains rather than regular freight service.

- Dedicated trains offer greater operational control over shipments.
- Shorter trains allow better visual monitoring from the locomotive and escort car, and thus, increased security command and control capabilities.
- Avoidance of lengthy "dwell times" in rail yards provides security and operational advantages.
- Significant cost savings could be realized over the life of the project due to the reduced need for extra rail cars and casks.
- Transit and turnaround times will be shorter, enabling the repository to operate with fewer casks and fewer railcar.
- Repository operational resources could be better managed by taking advantage of more predictable shipment and receipt schedules.
- DOE has listened to input from stakeholders that have indicated a preference for the use of dedicated trains for the transport of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste to a repository at Yucca Mountain.
- Making the decision now allows DOE to move forward to work with States and tribes on other issues such as routing, implementation of Section 180(c) and transportation operational planning.

Communicating the Decision

A general approach is recommended that includes an announcement at appropriate meeting (s), letters to the State of Nevada, affected units of local government, State organizations, appropriate Federal agencies, stakeholder groups, and tribal organizations. No press release is anticipated. The following are suggested steps to announce the decision.

STEP	When/Where	Who
1. Send a letter announcing the decision to State of Nevada, Staff of the State Regional Groups, appropriate Federal agencies, other stakeholder groups, and tribal organizations	Send the letters after RW-2 approval of policy decision	Paul Golan, with CI support for announcements
2. E-mail decision announcement from G. Lanthrum to Transportation External Coordination (TEC) Working Group membership and post on OCRWM and TEC web sites	After RW-2 approval of policy decision	J. Gary Lanthrum, Director, Office of National Transportation, OCRWM
3. Announce the decision to use dedicated trains at the next TEC meeting	Transportation External Coordination Working Group meeting, September 2005, in Pueblo, Colorado	Gary Lanthrum

Additional Actions

- Provide Policy Statement to support designated spokesperson(s) and Information Center personnel.

- Convey all pertinent information to OCRWM employees (DOE and contractors) through such vehicles as *The Portal*, *The Crest, BSC Today,* and other pertinent publications.