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COMMITTEE ON
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COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

January 11, 2011

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Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Members of the Blue Ribbon Commission:

As the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future enters its second full year of investigation into issues surrounding the disposal and final disposition of high-level radioactive waste, I would like to encourage the panel to actively consider holding one of their next meetings in the state of California. This issue is particularly relevant to our state, given the logistical challenges California faces with the storage and transport of spent fuel, as well as more pressing seismic concerns, which have yet to be fully addressed.

As you know, three of California's civilian power reactors are located directly on the Pacific Rim: Humboldt Bay (decommissioned with waste storage), Diablo Canyon and San Onofre. At present, Diablo Canyon and San Onofre, both of which reside in highly active seismic zones, are scheduled for decommissioning between 2022 and 2025, and both are currently storing high-level radioactive waste on site – in pools as well as dry casks. New seismic information is also emerging, such as the discovery in 2008 of the "Shoreline Fault" less than a mile from the Diablo Canyon spent fuel storage casks – a fault for which the latest seismic analysis is still incomplete. Further, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission acknowledges the special seismic circumstances of California's nuclear reactors in the draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants.

Holding a Blue Ribbon Commission meeting in California also provides an efficient way to pool much of the nation's expertise on seismic concerns. The U.S. Geological Survey, for example, is headquartered in Menlo Park. And, the California Geologic Survey and the State Seismic Safety Commission are further invaluable resources to your Commission. In addition, the California Coastal Commission and California Energy Commission have staff specifically devoted to seismic analysis.

I believe a meeting in California to discuss seismic research and analysis would be of great value to the Blue Ribbon Commission as the long-term nature of the hazards of high-level radioactive waste must also be considered in tandem with the concept of "geologic time." In the past 10,000 years of human history, tectonic and other geologic changes have visibly altered the natural landscape, burying some places and exposing

others. Placing radioactive waste in the presence of those forces and the examination of the potential consequences of such actions are issues we must treat with utmost care.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please contact Greg Haas on my staff at 805-546-8348.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lois Capps", written in a cursive style.

LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress