

APPENDIX

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APPENDIX A

United States Court of Appeals
for the Fifth Circuit

No. 21-60743

STATE OF TEXAS; GREG ABBOTT, *Governor of the State of Texas*; TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY; FASKEN LAND AND MINERALS, LIMITED; PERMIAN BASIN LAND AND ROYALTY OWNERS,

Petitioners,

versus

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Respondents.

Appeal from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Agency No. 72-1050

(Filed Aug. 25, 2023)

Before JONES, HO, and WILSON, *Circuit Judges*.
JAMES C. HO, *Circuit Judge*:

Nuclear power generation produces thousands of metric tons of nuclear waste each year. And such waste has been accumulating at nuclear power plants throughout the United States for decades. Congress has mandated that such waste be permanently stored in a geologic repository. But the development, licensing, and construction of that repository has stalled.

To address this problem, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has asserted that it has authority under the Atomic Energy Act to license temporary, away-from-reactor storage facilities for spent nuclear fuel. Based on that claim of authority, the Commission has issued a license for Interim Storage Partners, LLC, a private company, to operate a temporary storage facility on the Permian Basin, in Andrews County, Texas. Fasken Land and Minerals, Ltd., a for-profit organization working in oil and gas extraction, and Permian Basin Land and Royalty Owners (“PBLRO”), an association seeking to protect the interests of the Permian Basin, have petitioned for review of the license.¹ So has the State of Texas, which argues, *inter alia*, that the Atomic Energy Act doesn’t confer authority on the Commission to license such a facility.

Texas is correct. The Atomic Energy Act does not confer on the Commission the broad authority it claims to issue licenses for private parties to store spent nuclear fuel away-from-the-reactor. And the Nuclear Waste Policy Act establishes a comprehensive statutory scheme for dealing with nuclear waste generated from commercial nuclear power generation, thereby foreclosing the Commission’s claim of authority. Accordingly, we grant the petition for review and vacate the license.

¹ For the remainder of this opinion, we use the term “Fasken” to refer to Fasken Land and Minerals, Ltd. and PBLRO collectively, unless addressing an issue where it’s necessary to distinguish them.

I.

This case is the latest development in a decades-long debate over nuclear power and waste regulation. Accordingly, we provide a brief overview of relevant historical and technical background before delving into the specifics of the licensing proceedings challenged here.

A.

The United States began producing nuclear waste in the 1940s, first as a byproduct of nuclear weapons development and then as a byproduct of the commercial nuclear power industry. BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON AMERICA'S NUCLEAR FUTURE, REPORT TO THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY 19 (Jan. 2012) https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2013/04/f0/brc_finalreport_jan2012.pdf [hereinafter BRC REPORT]. The first nuclear reactor was demonstrated in 1942, and Congress authorized civilian application of atomic power through the Atomic Energy Act of 1946. *Pac. Gas & Elec. Co. v. State Energy Res. Conservation & Dev. Comm'n*, 461 U.S. 190, 206 (1983).

The Act granted regulatory authority over nuclear energy to the Atomic Energy Commission. *See Union of Concerned Scientists v. NRC*, 735 F.2d 1437, 1443 n.1 (D.C. Cir. 1984). But the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 disbanded that agency and redistributed its authority, as relevant here, to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. *Id.* After Congress passed the Atomic Energy Act, commercial production of nuclear energy boomed.

Commercial nuclear energy is produced through a series of industrial processes, which include the

mining and processing of nuclear fuel, the use of the fuel in a reactor, and the storage and ultimate disposal or reprocessing of that fuel. BRC REPORT at 9. Once nuclear fuel has been used in a reactor for about four to six years, it can no longer produce energy and is considered used or spent. *Id.* at 10. That spent fuel is removed from the reactor. *Id.*

Spent nuclear fuel is “fuel that has been withdrawn from a nuclear reactor following irradiation, the constituent elements of which have not been separated by reprocessing.” 42 U.S.C. § 10101(23). It’s “intensely radioactive” and “must be carefully stored.” *Pac. Gas & Elec. Co.*, 461 U.S. at 195. The spent fuel is first placed in wet pool storage for cooling, where it remains for at least five years, but may remain for decades. BRC REPORT at 11. Once the spent nuclear fuel has cooled sufficiently in wet storage, it’s generally transferred to dry cask storage. *Id.*

At first, there was little concern regarding storage for spent fuel. *See* BRC REPORT at 19–20; *Idaho v. DOE*, 945 F.2d 295, 298–99 (9th Cir. 1991). There was a widespread belief within the commercial nuclear energy industry that spent fuel would be reprocessed. *Idaho*, 945 F.2d 295, 298–99 (9th Cir. 1991). But the private reprocessing industry collapsed in the 1970s, *id.*, and growing concerns led President Ford to issue a directive deferring commercial reprocessing and recycling, which President Carter later extended. BRC REPORT at 20. Although President Reagan reversed that policy, “for a variety of reasons, including costs, commercial reprocessing has never resumed.” *Id.*

After years of accumulating spent nuclear fuel in nuclear power plants throughout the country, *see* 42

U.S.C. § 10131(a)(3), Congress enacted the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1982. That Act sought to “devise a permanent solution to the problems of civilian radioactive waste disposal.” *Id.* It tasked the Department of Energy with establishing “a repository deep underground within a rock formation where the waste would be placed, permanently stored, and isolated from human contact.” *Nat’l Ass’ of Regul. Util. Comm’rs v. DOE*, 680 F.3d 819, 821 (D.C. Cir. 2012). Yucca Mountain in Nevada was chosen as the only suitable site for the repository. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 10172. The decision drew widespread opposition in Nevada. BRC REPORT at 22.

Decades of delay ensued. Despite a Congressional mandate that the Department of Energy start accepting waste from the States by January 31, 1998, *see* 42 U.S.C. § 10222(a)(5)(B), “by the mid-1990s, the Department of Energy made clear that it could not meet the 1998 deadline, and it came and went without the federal government accepting any waste.” *Texas v. U.S.*, 891 F.3d 553, 555–56 (5th Cir. 2018).

In 2008, the Department of Energy finally submitted its license application for the Yucca Mountain repository to the Commission. *In re Aiken Cnty.*, 725 F.3d 742, 258 (D.C. Cir. 2013). But the Commission “shut down its review and consideration” of the application. *Id.* By its own admission, the Commission had no intention of reviewing the application, *id.*, even though the Nuclear Waste Policy Act mandates a decision be made within three years of submission. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 10134(d).

In light of the delays and controversy, the Obama Administration decided to halt the work on the Yucca

Mountain repository. BRC REPORT at vi. The Obama Administration instead formed the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, which concluded that a consent-based approach to siting nuclear waste storage facilities would be preferred to the Yucca Mountain policy. *See id.* at vii–x.

Spent nuclear fuel continues to accumulate at reactor sites across the country. Some estimates suggest the U.S. inventory of spent nuclear fuel may exceed 200,000 metric tons by 2050. BRC REPORT at 14. The commercial nuclear power industry as a whole is estimated to generate between 2,000 and 2,400 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel each year. *Id.* And there are thousands of metric tons of spent fuel in various sites where commercial reactors no longer operate. *Id.*

B.

After the Blue Ribbon Commission embraced a consent-based approach for siting nuclear waste storage facilities, the governments of Texas and New Mexico expressed support for establishing facilities within the states. Then-Governors Rick Perry of Texas and Susana Martinez of New Mexico wrote letters supporting the establishment of facilities within their respective states. And Andrews County—a rural community located near the Texas-New Mexico border—passed a resolution in support of siting a spent nuclear fuel facility there.

Based in part on these expressions of support, Waste Control Specialists, LLC applied to the Commission for a license to operate a consolidated interim storage facility for high-level spent nuclear fuel in Andrews County. Andrews County is located within the

Permian Basin, one of the country's largest oil basins and a top global oil producer.

The Commission began its environmental review of the proposed facility in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 4321 *et seq.* But the application anticipated that the Department of Energy would take title to the spent nuclear fuel. Some stakeholders challenged the legality of that provision as prohibited by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. Waste Control Specialists then asked the Commission to suspend its review.

Approximately a year later, Interim Storage Partners, LLC—a partnership between the original applicant, Waste Control Specialists, and another company—asked the Commission to resume its review of the now-revised license application. In its summary report on the scoping period, the Commission noted that it had received comments expressing concerns that the facility would become a *de facto* permanent disposal facility and that the license would be illegal under existing regulations. The Commission responded that such comments were outside the scope of the environmental impact statement.

In December 2019, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board—the independent adjudicatory division of the Commission—terminated an adjudicatory proceeding regarding the license application. Before the proceeding was terminated, Fasken timely filed five contentions alleging that the Commission violated the National Environmental Policy Act and its own regulations. The Board denied each one. The following month, Fasken filed a motion to reopen the record

along with a motion to amend a previously filed contention. The Board denied the motions.

The Commission published a draft environmental impact statement in May 2020. The Commission received approximately 2,527 unique comments on the draft environmental impact statement, and many opposed the facility. One comment was a letter from Texas Governor Greg Abbott urging the Commission to deny the license application because of the lack of a permanent repository and the importance of the Permian Basin to the nation's energy security and economy. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality submitted a comment that the licensing lacks public consent and doesn't properly account for the possibility that Texas would become the permanent solution of spent nuclear fuel disposal if the permanent repository isn't developed by the expiration of the facility's 40-year license term.

Fasken also submitted various comments. Its comments noted the uniqueness of the Permian Basin, the danger of transporting spent nuclear fuel to the facility, the lack of community consent, and the possibility that the facility could become a *de facto* permanent facility. Based on the draft environmental impact statement, Fasken also filed a second motion to reopen the adjudicatory proceeding. The Board once again denied the request.

The Commission issued the final environmental impact statement in July 2021. It recommended the license be issued, and noted that concerns regarding Yucca Mountain and the need for a permanent repository fell outside its scope. In an appendix, the Commission responded to timely comments, including

those from Petitioners. The Commission responded to concerns that the facility would become a *de facto* permanent repository by noting the application was only for a temporary facility.

The following September, the Texas Legislature passed H.B. 7. The statute makes it illegal to “dispose of or store high level radioactive waste” in Texas. Governor Abbott sent a letter to the Commission with a copy of H.B. 7. He reiterated that “the State of Texas has serious concerns with the design of the proposed ISP facility and with locating it in an area that is essential to the country’s energy security.” The next day, Fasken submitted an environmental analysis critiquing various aspects of the final environmental impact statement.

A few days later, the Commission issued the license.

Texas and Fasken have now petitioned this court for review of the license. Texas asks that the license be set aside. And Fasken asks that we suspend all further activities on the facility and remand to the Commission for a hard look analysis. While this case was pending before this court, Fasken and others who sought but were denied intervention in the agency adjudication had a petition for review pending before the D.C. Circuit appealing the denials of their intervention. See *Don’t Waste Michigan v. NRC*, 2023 WL 395030 (Jan. 25, 2023). The petition was denied in January 2023. *Id.* at *1. Interim Storage Partners, LLC intervened in this case to represent its interests.

II.

We begin with jurisdiction. The Commission challenges this court's jurisdiction to hear the petitions for review for lack of both constitutional standing and statutory standing. We consider each argument in turn and find neither succeeds.

A.

As a preliminary matter, the Commission suggests that Petitioners forfeited constitutional standing by failing to argue it in their opening briefs. We disagree.

Neither Petitioner argued constitutional standing beyond their general jurisdictional statements. Generally, a petitioner is required "to present specific facts supporting standing through citations to the administrative record or affidavits or other evidence attached to its opening brief, *unless standing is self-evident.*" *Sierra Club v. EPA*, 793 F.3d 656, 662 (6th Cir. 2015) (emphasis added, quotation omitted). A petitioner may reasonably believe standing to be self-evident when "nothing in the record alerted [the] petitioners to the possibility that their standing would be challenged." *Am. Libr. Ass'n v. FCC*, 401 F.3d 489, 492 (D.C. Cir. 2005). That's the case here.

From the earliest stages of this proceeding, the Commission has challenged jurisdiction on statutory standing grounds only. It twice moved to dismiss, but neither motion challenged constitutional standing. Accordingly, Petitioners could reasonably assume it was self-evident. *Cf. Ctr. for Biological Diversity v. EPA*, 937 F.3d 533, 542 n.4 (5th Cir. 2019) ("overlook[ing] Petitioners' decision to include only a

cursory discussion of standing because . . . they had a good-faith (though mistaken) belief that standing would be both undisputed and easy to resolve”). And—once constitutional standing was challenged—both Petitioners provided well-developed legal arguments with citations to the record and evidence to show their standing. Petitioners haven’t forfeited constitutional standing.

The “irreducible constitutional minimum” of standing requires that Petitioners “must have (1) suffered an injury in fact, (2) that is fairly traceable to the challenged conduct of the defendant, and (3) that is likely to be redressed by a favorable judicial decision.” *Spokeo, Inc. v. Robins*, 578 U.S. 330, 338 (2016). The causation elements of the constitutional standing analysis are easily met: Petitioners’ alleged injuries directly result from the issuance of the license (traceability), and an order from this court could vacate the license (redressability). So only injury in fact is at issue.

The Commission argues that the licensing and eventual operation of the storage facility doesn’t injure either Texas or Fasken. We disagree. Because “the presence of one party with standing is sufficient to satisfy Article III’s case-or-controversy requirement,” we may proceed even if only one of the Petitioners has standing. *Rumsfeld v. FAIR*, 547 U.S. 47, 52 n.2 (2006). But here both Petitioners successfully assert an injury resulting from the license.

Texas meets the injury-in-fact requirement because the license preempts state law. Texas has “a sovereign interest in the power to create and enforce a legal code.” *Tex. Off. of Pub. Util. Counsel v. FCC*,

183 F.3d 393, 449 (5th Cir. 1999) (quotation omitted) (holding that Texas has standing to challenge the FCC’s assertion of authority over an aspect of telecommunications regulation that the State believed it controlled). And we have held that the preemption of an existing state law can constitute an injury. *Texas v. United States*, 787 F.3d 733, 749 (5th Cir. 2015). “A state has standing based on a conflict between federal and state law if the state statute at issue regulates behavior or provides for the administration of a state program, but not if it simply purports to immunize state citizens from federal law.” *Id.* (cleaned up). Here the issuance of the license and resulting operation of the facility directly conflicts with H.B. 7.

The Texas Legislature has enacted legislation that prevents the storage of high-level radioactive waste, including spent nuclear fuel, within the State except at currently or formerly operating nuclear power reactors. The legislation also amends Texas statutes to add that “a person, including the compact waste disposal facility license holder, may not dispose of or store high level radioactive waste in this state.” TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 401.072. Although a non-binding, declaratory state statute would not be enough to confer standing, here there’s an enforceability conflict between the license and operation of the facility, which authorizes storage of high-level radioactive waste in Texas, and H.B. 7, which proscribes such storage. *Cf. Virginia v. Sebelius*, 656 F.3d 253, 270 (4th Cir. 2011) (a state statute that is merely a “non-binding declaration [and] does not create any genuine conflict . . . creates no sovereign interest capable of producing injury-in-fact”). That’s enough for Texas to assert an injury.

Fasken also has standing based on its proximity to radioactive materials. To establish injury in an environmental case, there's a "geographic-nexus requirement." *Biological Diversity*, 937 F.3d at 538. "The Supreme Court has ruled that geographic remoteness forecloses a finding of injury when no further facts have been brought forward showing that the impact in those distant places will in some fashion be reflected where the plaintiffs are." *Id.* (cleaned up). *See also id.* at 540 ("when a person visits an area for aesthetic purposes, pollution interfering with his aesthetic enjoyment may cause an injury in fact," if "the aesthetic experience was actually offensive to the plaintiff"). Fasken has provided evidence of its members' geographic proximity to the facility. Some of Fasken's members own land within four miles of the facility, draw water from wells beneath the facility, drive within a mile of the facility, use rail lines the facility would use, and travel on highways within a few hundred feet of the rail lines that transport spent nuclear fuel to the facility. In the context of radioactive materials, such proximity is sufficient to establish injury. *See Duke Power Co. v. Caroline Env't Study Grp., Inc.*, 438 U.S. 59, 74 (1978) ("[T]he emission of non-natural radiation into appellees' environment would also seem a direct and present injury."). *See also Nuclear Energy Inst., Inc. v. EPA*, 373 F.3d 1251, 1266 (D.C. Cir. 2004) (finding a petitioner living 18 miles from Yucca Mountain had standing); *Kelley v. Selin*, 42 F.3d 1501, 1509 (6th Cir. 1995) (finding petitioners who "own[] land in close proximity to . . . the proposed site for spent fuel storage" had "alleged sufficient injury to establish standing").

PBLRO also has associational standing. “Associational standing is a three-part test: (1) the association’s members would independently meet the Article III standing requirements; (2) the interests the association seeks to protect are germane to the purpose of the organization; and (3) neither the claim asserted, nor the relief requested requires participation of individual members.” *Biological Diversity*, 937 F.3d at 536 (quoting *Texas Democratic Party v. Benkiser*, 459 F.3d 582, 587 (5th Cir. 2006)). Each of those elements is met. First, some of its members have an injury because they live, work, or regularly drive close the facility. And as we’ve already noted, *see supra*, the causation elements are met. Next, “the germaneness requirement is undemanding and requires mere pertinence between the litigation at issue and the organization’s purpose.” *Ass’n of Am. Physicians & Surgeons, Inc. v. Texas Med. Bd.*, 627 F.3d 547, 550 n.2 (5th Cir. 2010) (quotations omitted). This factor is easily met because PBLRO was created specifically to oppose the facility. Last, there’s no reason to believe that PBLRO is unable to represent its members’ interests without their individual participation. *See id.* at 551–53 (noting this prong usually isn’t met when the relief sought is damages for individual members or the claim requires fact-intensive-individual inquiry).

B.

Petitioners seeking to challenge a final order from the Commission also need standing under the Administrative Orders Review Act, generally known as the Hobbs Act. *See Reytblatt v. NRC*, 105 F.3d 715, 720 (D.C. Cir. 1997) (“[T]he Hobbs Act requires (1) ‘party’ status (i.e., that petitioners participated in the

proceeding before the agency), and (2) aggrievement (i.e., that they meet the requirements of constitutional and prudential standing).”) (citation omitted).

The Hobbs Act vests “exclusive jurisdiction to enjoin, set aside, suspend (in whole or in part), or determine the validity of . . . final orders of the” Commission on the federal courts of appeals. 28 U.S.C. § 2342. (The Act actually refers to the Atomic Energy Commission. But the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 abolished that agency and transferred its licensing and related regulatory functions to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 5841(a), (f).)

Under the Act, “[a]ny party aggrieved by the final order may . . . file a petition to review the order in the court of appeals wherein venue lies.” 28 U.S.C. § 2344. Courts “have consistently held that the phrase ‘party aggrieved’ requires that petitioners have been parties to the underlying agency proceedings, not simply parties to the present suit.” *ACA Int’l v. FCC*, 885 F.3d 687, 711 (D.C. Cir. 2018). *See also Am. Trucking Ass’ns v. ICC*, 673 F.2d 82, 84 (5th Cir. 1982) (per curiam) (“The word ‘party’ is used in a definite sense in the [Hobbs Act], and limits the right to appeal to those who actually participated in the agency proceeding.”). The Commission argues that neither Texas nor Fasken has standing under the Hobbs Act because neither is a “party aggrieved.”

“To be an aggrieved party, one must have participated in the agency proceeding under review.” *Wales Transp., Inc. v. ICC*, 728 F.2d 774, 776 n.1 (5th Cir. 1984). Here, both Petitioners participated in the agency proceeding—Texas commented on its opposition of the issuance of the license and Fasken

attempted to intervene and filed contentions. But according to the Commission, neither form of participation is sufficient to confer party status under the Hobbs Act.

The Commission argues that Texas doesn't have party status because "participating in the appropriate and available administrative procedures is the statutorily prescribed prerequisite to invocation of the Court's jurisdiction," and submitting comments doesn't accord with the degree of formality of the proceedings in this license adjudication.²

² In the alternative, the Commission argues that "even if this Court were to determine that dismissal of [Texas's] Petition for Review is not required as a matter of jurisdiction, the same result is nonetheless required as a matter of non-jurisdictional, mandatory exhaustion." Not so. The Commission relies on *Fleming v. USDA*, which held that "even nonjurisdictional exhaustion requirements . . . forbid judges from excusing non-exhaustion" and that "if the government raises [such an] exhaustion requirement, the court must enforce it." 987 F.3d 1093, 1099 (D.C. Cir. 2021). But neither the Hobbs Act nor the Atomic Energy Act impose a mandatory exhaustion requirement. The Commission's argument implicitly equates the exhaustion requirements in the Horse Protection Act and the Prison Litigation Reform Act—both of which are discussed in *Fleming*—to the Hobbs Act and Atomic Energy Act. These statutes aren't comparable. Both the Horse Protection Act and the Prison Litigation Reform Act have explicit exhaustion requirements. See 7 U.S.C. § 6912(e) ("[A] person shall exhaust all administrative appeal procedures established by the Secretary [of Agriculture] or required by law before the person may bring an action in a court of competent jurisdiction."); 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a) ("No action shall be brought with respect to prison conditions under section 1983 of this title, or any other Federal law, by a prisoner confined in any jail, prison, or other correctional facility until such an administrative remedies as are available are exhausted."). But neither the Hobbs Act nor the

The Commission takes a different approach with Fasken. It argues that, as a party denied intervention, Fasken may only challenge the order denying it intervention. From the Commission’s perspective, if a putative intervenor has failed to obtain party status, it can’t later seek review of the final judgment on the merits.

The plain text of the Hobbs Act merely requires that a petitioner seeking review of an agency action be a “party aggrieved.” 28 U.S.C. § 2344. The text makes no distinction between different kinds of agency proceedings. *See Gage v. AEC*, 479 F.2d 1214, 1218 (D.C. Cir. 1973). Nor does it suggest that a petitioner who went through the procedures to intervene in an adjudication can’t be a party aggrieved. In fact, it’s clear that the function of the “party aggrieved” status requirement is to ensure that the agency had the opportunity to consider the issue that petitioners are concerned with. *See, e.g., id.* at 1219 (“The ‘party’ status requirement operates to preclude direct appellate court review without a record which at least resulted from the fact-finder’s focus on the alternative

Atomic Energy Act do. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 2344 (no exhaustion requirement); 42 U.S.C. § 2239(b) (same).

It’s also worth noting that caselaw suggests that so long as the petitioner is a “party aggrieved” and the basis for the challenge was brought before the agency by *some* party— *even if* not the by the petitioner—that’s enough for the case to move forward. *See Reytblatt*, 105 F.3d at 720–21; *Cellnet Commc’n, Inc. v. FCC*, 965 F.2d 1106, 1109 (D.C. Cir. 1992). It’d make little sense to interpret the Hobbs Act as imposing an exhaustion requirement while allowing a petitioner to bring a claim it did not itself bring before the agency.

regulatory provisions which petitioners propose.”) (emphases omitted).

In sum, the plain text of the Hobbs Act requires only that a petitioner have participated—in some way—in the agency proceedings, which Texas did through comments and Fasken did by seeking intervention and filing contentions. But caselaw suggests that’s not enough.

Precedent from other circuits suggests that neither Texas nor Fasken are parties aggrieved for Hobbs Act purposes. The D.C. Circuit has read the Hobbs Act to contemplate participation in “the appropriate and available administrative procedures.” *Id.* at 1217. And it has interpreted this to mean that the “degree of participation necessary to achieve party status varies according to the formality with which the proceeding was conducted.” *Water Transp. Ass’n v. ICC*, 819 F.2d 1189, 1192 (D.C. Cir. 1987). *But see ACA Int’l*, 885 F.3d at 711–712 (noting that in at least some limited circumstances commenting may be enough in certain non-rulemaking proceedings). The D.C. Circuit and at least one other circuit apply this heightened participation requirement. *See Ohio Nuclear-Free Network v. NRC*, 53 F.4th 236, 239 (D.C. Cir. 2022); *Alabama Power Co. v. ICC*, 852 F.2d 1361, 1368 (D.C. Cir. 1988). *See also State ex rel. Balderas v. NRC*, 59 F.4th 1112, 1117 (10th Cir. 2023). The D.C. Circuit has also said that, when an agency requires intervention, those who sought but were denied intervention lack standing to seek judicial review. *Water Transp. Ass’n*, 819 F.2d at 1192. *See also NRDC v. NRC*, 823 F.3d 641, 643 (D.C. Cir. 2016) (“To challenge the Commission’s grant of a license renewal . . . a party must have

successfully intervened in the proceeding by submitting adequate contentions under [the Commission’s regulations].”).

The D.C. Circuit embraces readings of the Hobbs Act that impose an extra-textual gloss by requiring a degree of participation not contemplated in the plain text of the statute. We think the fairest reading of the Hobbs Act doesn’t impose such additional requirements. But we ultimately don’t need to resolve that tension, because the Fifth Circuit recognizes an exception to the Hobbs Act party-aggrieved status requirement that’s dispositive of this issue here.

This circuit recognizes an *ultra vires* exception to the party-aggrieved status requirement. In *American Trucking Associations, Inc. v. ICC*, this court noted “two rare instances” where a “person may appeal an agency action even if not a party to the original agency proceeding”—(1) where “the agency action is attacked as exceeding [its] power” and (2) where the person “challenges the constitutionality of the statute conferring authority on the agency.” 673 F.2d at 85 n.4 (quotation omitted).³

³ The Commission’s various arguments that this exception isn’t applicable are unavailing. It’s true that we’ve recognized the exception is “exceedingly narrow.” *Merchants Fast Motor Lines, Inc. v. ICC*, 5 F.3d 911, 922 (5th Cir. 1993). And it’s also true that other circuits have refused to adopt it. See *Balderas*, 59 F.4th at 1123–24; *Nat’l Ass’n of State Util. Consumer Advoc. v. FCC*, 457 F.3d 1238, 1250 (11th Cir. 2006); *Erie-Niagara Rail Steering Comm. v. STB*, 167 F.3d 111, 112–13 (2d Cir. 1999); *In re Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pac. R.R.*, 799 F.2d 317, 334–35 (7th Cir. 1986). But the exception remains good law in this circuit. Neither the Commission nor the court have identified any case overturning the exception. And to the extent that the

This exception only allows us to reach those portions of the Petitioners' challenges that argue the Commission acted beyond its statutory authority. See *Wales Transp.*, 728 F.2d at 776 n.1 (allowing petitioner to proceed despite not having participated in the agency proceeding on only those claims that challenged the agency's authority under the statute). Accordingly, we must consider which, if any, of the Petitioners' challenges fall within that category.

Texas makes three merits arguments: (1) the Commission lacks the statutory authority to license the facility; (2) the license issuance violated the Administrative Procedure Act; and (3) the Commission violated the National Environmental Policy Act by failing to assess the risks of a potential terrorist attack. The first argument falls within the exception. It attacks the Commission for licensing a facility without the authority to do so under the Atomic Energy Act, and in conflict with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

Fasken makes four merits arguments: (1) the Commission violated the National Environmental

Commission claims the exception was mere dicta in *American Trucking*, that argument fails because we've since applied the exception in *Wales Transportation, Inc. v. ICC*, 728 F.2d 774, 776 n.1 (5th Cir. 1984). Under our circuit's rule of orderliness, we are bound to follow *American Trucking* and *Wales Transportation* because they haven't been overturned by the en banc court. The Commission is also wrong in suggesting the exception is limited to challenges of ICC orders. While it's true that both *American Trucking* and *Wales Transportation* involved challenges to ICC orders, neither case limits the exception's application to the ICC. See *Am. Trucking*, 673 F.2d at 85 n.4 (referring to agency proceedings, not ICC proceedings); *Wales Transp.*, 728 F.2d at 776 n.1 (same).

Policy Act and Administrative Procedure Act by allowing a licensing condition that violates the Nuclear Waste Policy Act; (2) the Commission's assumptions about when the permanent repository will be operational are arbitrary and capricious; (3) the Commission adopted an unreasonably narrow purpose statement; and (4) the Commission violated the National Environmental Policy Act and Administrative Procedure Act by accepting the applicant's unreasonable site selection. The first of these challenges falls within the exception. Fasken's argument centers on the contention that the Commission acted beyond its statutory authority by issuing a license with a condition expressly prohibited by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

III.

The Commission has no statutory authority to issue the license. The Atomic Energy Act doesn't authorize the Commission to license a private, away-from-reactor storage facility for spent nuclear fuel. And issuing such a license contradicts Congressional policy expressed in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. This understanding aligns with the historical context surrounding the development of these statutes.

A.

Under the Atomic Energy Act, the Commission retains jurisdiction over nuclear plant licensing and regulation. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 5842. It has authority to regulate the construction and operation of nuclear power plants. *See* 42 U.S.C. §§ 2011–2297h-13. *See also Union of Concerned Scientists*, 735 F.2d at 1438–39 (summarizing the two-step licensing procedure for nuclear power plant operation).

The Act also confers on the Commission the authority to issue licenses for the possession of “special nuclear material,” *see* 42 U.S.C. § 2073, “source material,” *see id.* § 2093, and “byproduct material,” *see id.* § 2111. *See also* 42 U.S.C. §§ 2014(aa), (z), (e) (defining each term, respectively). Special nuclear material, source material, and byproduct material are constituent materials of spent nuclear fuel. *See Bullcreek v. NRC*, 359 F.3d 536, 538 (D.C. Cir. 2004). The Commission argues that, because it has authority to issue licenses for the possession of these constituent materials, that means it has broad authority to license storage facilities for spent nuclear fuel.

But this ignores the fact that the Act authorizes the Commission to issue such licenses only for certain enumerated purposes—none of which encompass storage or disposal of material as radioactive as spent nuclear fuel.

Sections 2073 and 2093 specify that licenses may be issued for various types of research and development, *see* 42 U.S.C. §§ 2073(a)(1)–(a)(2), 2093(a)(1)–(a)(2). It also permits such other uses that the Commission either “determines to be appropriate to carry out the purposes of th[e] chapter,” *id.* § 2073(a)(4), or “approves . . . as an aid to science and industry,” *id.* § 2093(a)(4). Principles of statutory interpretation require these grants be read in light of the other, more specific purposes listed—namely for certain types of research and development. *Cf. U.S. v. Jicarilla Apache Nation*, 564 U.S. 162, 185 (2011) (“When Congress provides specific statutory obligations, we will not read a ‘catchall’ provision to impose general

obligations that would include those specifically enumerated.”).

Both these sections also allow the agency to issue licenses “for use under a license issued pursuant to section 2133 of th[e] title.” *Id.* 42 U.S.C. §§ 2073(a)(3), 2093(a)(3) (same). Section 2133 details the Commission’s authority to issue licenses for “utilization or production facilities for industrial or commercial purposes.” *Id.* § 2133(a). Utilization and production have specific definitions under the statute. *See id.* §§ 2014 (cc) (defining utilization facilities); 2014(v) (defining production facilities). And the definitions of utilization and production facilities are about nuclear reactors and fuel fabrication or enrichment facilities—not storage or disposal, as the Commission admits in its briefing. *See id.* Neither § 2073 nor § 2093 confers a broad grant of authority to issue licenses for any type of possession of special nuclear material or source material.

The same is true for § 2111. That section authorizes the Commission “to issue general or specific licenses to applicants seeking to use byproduct material for research or development purposes, for medical therapy, industrial uses, agricultural uses, or such other useful applications as may be developed.” *Id.* § 2111(a). It also specifies conditions under which certain types of byproduct material may be disposed. *Id.* § 2111(b). And the types of byproduct material covered by § 2111(b) emit radiation for significantly less time than spent nuclear fuel.

That section cross-references the definition of byproduct materials in § 2014(e)(3)–(4), which refers to radium-226 and other material that “would pose a

threat similar to the threat posed by . . . radium-226 to the public health and safety.” That’s important because some of the isotopes in spent nuclear fuel have much longer half-lives than radium-226. The “intensity of radiation from radioactive materials decreases over time” and the “time required for the intensity to decrease by one-half is referred to as the ‘half-life.’” NRC, FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) REGARDING RADIUM-226 § A.1, <https://scp.nrc.gov/narmtoolbox/radium%20faq102008.pdf>. Radium-226 has a half-life of 1600 years. *Id.* Spent nuclear fuel, on the other hand, is composed of a variety of radioactive isotopes of elements produced in the nuclear fission process. NRC, RADIO-ACTIVE WASTE BACKGROUNDER 1, <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML0501/ML050110277.pdf>. Some of these isotopes—strontium-90 and cesium-137—have half-lives of about 30 years. But others “take much longer to decay.” *Id.* One of these isotopes is plutonium-239, which “has a half-life of 24,000 years”—fifteen times that of radium-226. *Id.* There’s no plausible argument that spent nuclear fuel, which contains radioactive isotopes with half-lives much longer than radium-226, is the type radioactive material contemplated in the disposal provision in § 2111(b).

So these provisions do not support the Commission’s claim of authority. In response, the Commission and Interim Storage Partners, LLC point to two cases from sister circuits. Both are unpersuasive.

In *Bullcreek v. NRC*, the D.C. Circuit denied petitions for review of the Commission’s Rulemaking Order and held that the Nuclear Waste Policy Act did “not repeal or supersede the [Commission]’s authority

under the Atomic Energy Act to license private away-from-reactor storage facilities.” 359 F.3d at 537–38. The D.C. Circuit essentially assumed that the Atomic Energy Act had granted the Commission authority to license away-from-reactor storage facilities, despite explicitly recognizing that the Act “does not specifically refer to the storage or disposal of spent nuclear fuel.” *Id.* at 538. Rather than focus on the text of the statute, it merely noted that “it has long been recognized that the [Atomic Energy Act] confers on the [Commission] authority to license and regulate the storage and disposal of such fuel.” *Id.* But none of the cases the D.C. Circuit cited provide a textual analysis of the Atomic Energy Act and whether it allows away-from-reactor spent nuclear fuel storage. Each of those cases dealt with separate questions of preemption and the role of states in this scheme. *See generally Pac. Gas. & Elec. v. State Energy Res. Conservation & Dev. Comm’n*, 461 U.S. 190 (1983); *Jersey Cent. Power & Light Co. v. Twp. of Lacey*, 772 F.2d 1103 (3d Cir. 1985); *Illinois v. Gen. Elec. Co.*, 683 F.2d 206 (7th Cir. 1982). They are irrelevant to the question before us.

So the D.C. Circuit provided no textual basis for its assumption that the statute authorized the Commission to issue such licenses. *See id.* (discussing the Atomic Energy Act). *Bullcreek* may be correct that the Nuclear Waste Policy Act didn’t repeal portions of the Atomic Energy Act since “repeals by implication are not favored,” but it doesn’t actually address what authority the Commission had under the Atomic Energy Act. *Morton v. Mancari*, 417 U.S. 535, 549 (1974).

The other case the Commission cites—*Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians v. Nielson*, 376 F.3d 1223

(10th Cir. 2004)—is just as unhelpful. It merely relies on *Bullcreek* to “not revisit the issues surrounding the [Commission]’s authority to license away-from-reactor [spent nuclear fuel] storage facilities.” *Skull Valley*, 376 F.3d at 1232. It too assumes the Commission’s authority without analyzing the statute.

B.

Moreover, the Commission’s argument cannot be reconciled with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

Spent nuclear fuel wasn’t a concern in the 1940s and 1950s when the Atomic Energy Act was passed and amended. “Prior to the late 1970’s, private utilities operating nuclear reactors were largely unconcerned with the storage of spent nuclear fuel.” *Idaho*, 945 F.2d at 298. “It was accepted that spent fuel would be reprocessed.” *Id.* “In the mid-70’s, however, the private reprocessing industry collapsed for both economic and regulatory reasons.” *Id.* “As a consequence, the nuclear industry was confronted with an unanticipated accumulation of spent nuclear fuel, inadequate private facilities for the storage of the spent fuel, and no long term plans for managing nuclear waste.” *Id.* *See also* BRC REPORT at 20 (noting these problems and describing passage of the Act as “mark[ing] the beginning of a new chapter in U.S. efforts to deal with the nuclear waste issue”). This led Congress to pass the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1982.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act provides a comprehensive scheme to address the accumulation of nuclear waste. Congress recognized that “Federal efforts during the [prior] 30 years to devise a permanent solution to the problems of civilian radioactive waste disposal ha[d] not been adequate” and that “State and

public participation in the planning and development of repositories is essential in order to promote public confidence in the safety of disposal of such waste and spent fuel.” 42 U.S.C. § 10131(a)(3), (6). “The Act made the federal government responsible for permanently disposing of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste produced by civilian nuclear power generation and defense activities.” *Nat’l Ass’n of Regul. Util. Comm’rs v. DOE*, 680 F.3d 819, 821 (D.C. Cir. 2012). *See also* 42 U.S.C. § 10131(a)(4) (“[T]he Federal Government has the responsibility to provide for the permanent disposal of high-level radioactive waste and such spent nuclear fuel as may be disposed of in order to protect the public health and safety and the environment.”).

The Act also tasked the Department of Energy with establishing “a repository deep underground within a rock formation where the waste would be placed, permanently stored, and isolated from human contact.” *Nat’l Ass’n of Regul. Util. Comm’rs*, 680 F.3d at 821. *See also* 42 U.S.C. §§ 100133–34 (tasking the Energy Secretary with site characterization and public hearing duties related to the Yucca Mountain site selection). Yucca Mountain was chosen as the only suitable site for the repository when the Act was amended in 1987. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 10172 (selection of Yucca Mountain site). But the project stalled, even though the Nuclear Waste Policy Act “is obviously designed to prevent the Department [of Energy] from delaying the construction of Yucca Mountain as the permanent facility while using temporary facilities.” *Nat’l Ass’n of Regul. Util. Comm’rs v. DOE*, 736 F.3d 517, 519 (D.C. Cir. 2013) (citing 42 U.S.C. § 10168(d)(1)).

In addition to the establishment of the permanent repository, *see* 42 U.S.C. §§ 10131–10145, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act also established other measures to deal with spent nuclear fuel.⁴

One is temporary storage. *See id.* §§ 10151–10157. The Act places “primary responsibility for providing interim storage of spent nuclear fuel” on “the persons owning and operating civilian nuclear power reactors.” *Id.* § 10151(a)(1). It tasks the Commission and the Secretary of Energy to “take such actions as . . . necessary to encourage and expedite the effective use of available storage, and the necessary additional storage, *at the site* of each civilian nuclear power reactor.” *Id.* § 10152 (emphasis added). *See also id.* § 10153 (“The establishment of such procedures shall not preclude the licensing . . . of any technology for the storage of civilian spent nuclear fuel *at the site* of any civilian nuclear power reactor.”) (emphasis added). It further tasks the Secretary of Energy with “provid[ing] . . . capacity for the storage of spent nuclear fuel from civilian nuclear power reactors.” *Id.* § 10155(a)(1). Moreover, the Act provides that “the Federal Government has the responsibility to provide . . . not more than 1,900 metric tons of capacity for interim storage of spent nuclear fuel for civilian nuclear power reactors that cannot reasonably provide adequate storage capacity” where it is necessary

⁴ All these measures are subject to the proviso in 42 U.S.C. § 10155(h), which states that “nothing in this chapter shall be construed to encourage, authorize, or require the private or Federal use, purchase, lease, or other acquisition of any storage facility located away from the site of any civilian nuclear power reactor and not owned by the Federal Government on” the date of enactment.

for the “continued, orderly operation of such reactors.” *Id.* § 10151(a)(3). Moreover, the Act provides that “the Federal Government has the responsibility to provide . . . not more than 1,900 metric tons of capacity for interim storage of spent nuclear fuel for civilian nuclear power reactors that cannot reasonably provide adequate storage capacity” where it is necessary for the “continued, orderly operation of such reactors.” *Id.* § 10151(a)(3). Here, the license permits storage of at least 5,000 and as much as 40,000 metric tons of nuclear waste.

The other measure is monitored retrievable storage. *See id.* § 10161–10169. *See also id.* § 10101(34) (defining “monitored retrievable storage facility”). Under the statute, “[t]he Secretary [of Energy] is authorized to site, construct, and operate one monitored retrievable storage facility subject to the conditions described [in the relevant sections of statute].” *Id.* § 10162(b). And one of those conditions is that “[a]ny license issued by the Commission for a monitored retrievable storage facility under [the statute] shall provide that . . . construction of such facility may not begin until the Commission has issued a license for the construction of a repository [i.e., Yucca Mountain].” *Id.* § 10168(d)(1).

Reading these provisions together makes clear that the Nuclear Waste Policy Act creates a comprehensive statutory scheme for addressing spent nuclear fuel accumulation. The scheme prioritizes construction of the permanent repository and limits temporary storage to private at-the-reactor storage or at federal sites. It plainly contemplates that, until there’s a permanent repository, spent nuclear fuel is

to be stored onsite at-the-reactor or in a federal facility.

In sum, the Atomic Energy Act doesn't authorize the Commission to license a private, away-from-reactor storage facility for spent nuclear fuel. And the Nuclear Waste Policy Act doesn't permit it. Accordingly, we hold that the Commission doesn't have authority to issue the license challenged here.

When read alongside each other, we find these statutes unambiguous. And even if the statutes were ambiguous, the Commission's interpretation wouldn't be entitled to deference.

Last year, the Supreme Court directed that, “[w]here the statute at issue is one that confers authority upon an administrative agency, that inquiry must be shaped, at least in some measure, by the nature of the question presented—whether Congress in fact meant to confer the power the agency has asserted” and whether there are “reason[s] to hesitate before concluding that Congress meant to confer such authority.” *West Virginia v. EPA*, 142 S. Ct. 2587, 2607–08 (2022) (quotations omitted) (adopting the major questions doctrine).

Disposal of nuclear waste is an issue of great “economic and political significance.” *Id.* at 2608. What to do with the nation's ever-growing accumulation of nuclear waste is a major question that—as the history of the Yucca Mountain repository shows—has been hotly politically contested for over a half century. Congress itself has acknowledged that “high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel have become major subjects of public concern.” 42 U.S.C. § 10131(a)(7) (findings section of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act). “A

decision of such magnitude and consequence rests with Congress itself, or an agency acting pursuant to *clear* delegation from that representative body.” *West Virginia*, 142 S. Ct. at 2616 (emphasis added). Here, there’s no such clear delegation under the Atomic Energy Act. And the Nuclear Waste Policy Act belies the Commission’s arguments to the contrary.

* * *

We grant the petitions for review, vacate the license, and deny the Commission’s motions to dismiss.

APPENDIX B

United States Court of Appeals
for the Fifth Circuit

No. 21-60743

STATE OF TEXAS; GREG ABBOTT, *Governor of the State of Texas*; TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY; FASKEN LAND AND MINERALS, LIMITED; PERMIAN BASIN LAND AND ROYALTY OWNERS,

Petitioners,

versus

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Respondents.

Appeal from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Agency No. 72-1050

ON PETITION FOR REHEARING EN BANC

(Filed Mar. 14, 2024)

Before JONES, HO, and WILSON, *Circuit Judges.*

PER CURIAM:

The court having been polled at the request of one of its members, and a majority of the judges who are in regular active service and not disqualified not having voted in favor (FED. R. APP. P. 35, 36 and 5TH CIR. R. 35), the petition for rehearing en banc is DENIED.

In the en banc poll, seven judges voted in favor of rehearing en banc (Stewart, Southwick, Graves, Higginson, Willett, Douglas, and Ramirez), and nine voted against rehearing en banc (Richman, Jones, Smith, Elrod, Haynes, Ho, Duncan, Engelhardt, and Wilson).

Judge Oldham is recused and did not participate in the poll.

NO. 21-60743, STATE OF TEXAS v. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMM'n

EDITH H. JONES, *Circuit Judge*, joined by SMITH, ELROD, HO, ENGELHARDT, and WILSON, *Circuit Judges*, concurring in the denial of rehearing en banc:

The panel previously identified two bases of authority to review the NRC's proposed action to redirect the storage of nuclear energy waste away from Yucca Mountain, in conflict with federal law: these petitioners are parties aggrieved, and the NRC has acted *ultra vires*. The dissent challenges both grounds of jurisdiction. We continue to adhere to our position that the judiciary has not only the authority but the duty to review the NRC's actions, which may threaten significant environmental damage in the Permian Basin, one of the largest fossil fuel deposits in the world.

1. "Party Aggrieved"

Who has the ability to secure judicial review of this particular licensing decision? There's no question of Article III standing for the petitioners. Also, there's no question that Fasken (shorthand for petitioning mineral operators and landowners neighboring the proposed storage site) is "aggrieved." Nor that the state of Texas, which submitted comments and later passed a law prohibiting such storage, is "aggrieved." The argument is made that under Section 2344 of the Hobbs Act, "parties aggrieved" who may seek judicial review means only those whom the agency permitted to intervene in the licensing proceeding. But here, Fasken's multiple attempts formally to intervene were repeatedly rebuffed by the agency. *See Texas v. NRC* 78 F.4th 827, 834. If this argument is accepted, in other words, the NRC controls the courthouse door

through its authority to determine who may be “parties” to licensing proceedings. And the state of Texas, which didn’t formally attempt to intervene but made its position plainly known to NRC, has no access to judicial review at all.

The question of our jurisdiction is therefore bound up with fundamental principles governing review of agency decisions. Specifically, the courts default in our duty to “say what the law is” (i.e., *Marbury v Madison*, 1 Cranch 137 (1803)) if we enable the agency to be the unilateral “decider” of the statutory term “party aggrieved.” *Massachusetts v. NRC*, 878 F.2d 1516, 1520 (1st Cir. 1989). Our duty is reinforced by the oft-stated “strong presumption” that a statute should be read in a way that accords with the “basic[] principle” that agency actions are “subject to judicial review.” *Guerrero-Lasparilla v. Barr*, 140 S. Ct. 1062, 1069 (2020); *Bowen v. Mich. Acad. Of Family Physicians*, 476 U.S. 667, 670, 106 S. Ct. 2133, 2135 (1986) (noting “the strong presumption that Congress intends judicial review of administrative action”); *Kirby Corp. v. Pena*, 109 F.3d 258, 261 (5th Cir. 1997) (“There is a ‘strong presumption’ that Congress intends there to be judicial review of administrative agency action, . . . and the government bears a ‘heavy burden’ when arguing that Congress meant to prohibit all judicial review”) (citations omitted); *Dart v. United States*, 848 F.2d 217, 221 (D.C. Cir. 1988) (“If the wording of a preclusion clause is less than absolute, . . . [j]udicial review is favored when an agency is charged with acting beyond its authority.”). A holding that courts cannot decide who are aggrieved parties according to the statutory language is not only contrary to these principles but also seems particularly unlikely in a legal

world where deference to agency interpretations of law, e.g., in *Auer* and *Chevron*, is under increasing scrutiny.

The contrary position of judicial abdication rests on a provision of the Atomic Energy Act that allegedly constitutes “the only process” by which the [NRC] could make a “party”: “[T]he Commission shall grant a hearing upon the request of *any person who may be affected* by the proceeding, and *shall admit any such person* as a party to such proceeding.” 42 U.S.C. § 2239(a)(1)(A) (emphasis added). Given the breadth of NRC’s statutory charge to allow “affected persons” to be made “parties,” it seems paradoxical to resort to the Hobbs Act to disable Fasken and Texas from judicial review by agency fiat. More specifically, with respect to the NRC’s proffered interpretation, there are two responses. First, the D.C. Circuit has interpreted the term “parties aggrieved” more broadly than simply those who were joined as formal parties by the agency to administrative proceedings. Second, to the extent a couple of courts have rigidly used the term “parties” to mean only those formally admitted in agency proceedings, those decisions are either distinguishable or wrong.

With a couple of exceptions noted below, the term “party aggrieved” for judicial review purposes has been interpreted flexibly by the D.C. Circuit itself. Beginning with *Simmons v. ICC*, 716 F.2d 40, 42 (D.C. Cir. 1983), then-judge Scalia laid the groundwork for interpreting that phrase as he held that “party aggrieved” means more than “person aggrieved” for purposes of Administrative Procedure Act judicial

review.¹ 5 U.S.C. § 702 (“A *person* suffering legal wrong because of agency action, or adversely affected or *aggrieved* by agency action within the meaning of a relevant statute, is entitled to judicial review thereof.” (emphasis added)). We don’t dispute that terminological distinction. But shortly afterward, the D.C. Circuit held that “party aggrieved” under the Hobbs Act must be interpreted flexibly in light of the nature of the administrative proceeding. *Water Transp. Ass’n v. ICC*, 819 F.2d 1189, 1192 (D.C. Cir. 1987); *see also ACA Int’l v. Fed. Communications Comm’n*, 885 F.3d 687, 711 (D.C. Cir. 2018); *Reyblatt v NRC*, 105 F.3d 715, 720 (D.C. Cir. 1997) (submitting comments in a rulemaking proceeding confers “party” status for Hobbs Act purposes). The court held in *Water Transp.* that the “degree of participation necessary to achieve party status varies according to the formality with which the proceeding was conducted.” 819 F.2d at 1192.

Decisions from other courts concur. *See Nat’l Ass’n Of State Util. Consumer Advocates v. FCC*, 457 F.3d 1238, 1250 (11th Cir. 2006) (holding that entities “participated in the proceedings” and “independently established their status as ‘party aggrieved’ by “submitting comments and notice of ex parte communications”), *opinion modified on denial of reh’g*, 468 F.3d 1272 (11th Cir. 2006); *Clark & Reid Co., Inc. v. United States*, 804 F.2d 3, 6 (1st Cir. 1986) (“[W]e do not equate the regulatory definition of a ‘party’ in an ICC

¹ Judge Scalia cites this court’s decision in *American Trucking Associations, Inc. v. ICC*, 673 F.2d 82, 84 (5th Cir. 1982), *cert. denied*, 103 S. Ct. 1272 (1983), as being in accord with the “party” requirement. We don’t dispute this either.

proceeding with the participatory party status required for judicial review under the Hobbs Act”); *Am. Civil Liberties Union v. FCC*, 774 F.2d 24, 26 (1st Cir. 1985) (observing that entities could have “participate[d] in the proceedings or review process as individual parties” if they had “filed comments with the agency or petitioned for reconsideration of the FCC’s final order”). Another indicium of the necessity for a practical judicial interpretation of this term arises from the fact that the Hobbs Act covers several quite different agencies and several types of proceedings: rulemaking, adjudication, and licensing. What makes for “party aggrieved” should be consistently interpreted and not left to the varying rules of practice of each agency for each type of proceeding.

Simmons itself supports finding that Fasken and Texas are each a “party aggrieved.” *Simmons* was a challenge to an ICC ratemaking proceeding, and the court held that Simmons, who had participated “by submitting comments” in another aspect of the proceeding (the “railroad docket”) could not be a “party aggrieved” as to the “motor carrier docket” aspect in which it had filed nothing. *Simmons*, 716 F.2d at 42, 45. The court’s analysis centered on whether to allow Simmons to challenge the outcome of that part of the proceeding where it hadn’t submitted any comments at all. That Simmons had standing under the Hobbs Act to challenge the deregulatory rule on the railroad docket—by virtue of filing comments—was uncontested. By analogy here, Fasken “participated” in the proceeding with comments, submissions, attendance at hearings, and factual submissions. And the state of Texas “participated” by filing comments that made its position plain. Indeed, NRC acknowledged the state’s

position in its final environmental impact statement. 85 Fed. Reg. 27,447, 27,448 (May 8, 2020). The agency became well aware of the petitioners’ concerns. Under *Water Transp.* and its progeny, Fasken and Texas should qualify for “party aggrieved” status.

Going back to the courts’ presumption of judicial review of agency action, the presumption may be overcome “only on a showing of clear and convincing evidence of a contrary legislative intent.” *Abbott Labs. v. Gardner*, 387 U.S. 136, 141, 87 S. Ct. 1507, 1511 (1967); *Traynor v. Turnage*, 485 U.S. 535, 542, 108 S. Ct. 1372, 1378 (1988); *see also Rhode Is. Dept. of Env. Mgmt. v. United States*, 304 F.3d 31, 41-42 (1st Cir. 2002). As the First Circuit also pointed out, requiring intervention for “party aggrieved” status is “circular...[t]he NRC cannot now claim that by refusing to grant the Commonwealth’s requests to become a party, the NRC’s decisions are beyond review.” *Massachusetts*, 878 F.2d at 1520.

We acknowledge that the D.C. Circuit and Tenth Circuit have counterintuitively adopted NRC’s circular position.² This panel’s position, however, relies on the above citations from the D.C. Circuit and other courts. The bottom line for Hobbs Act “party aggrieved” status is to participate in agency proceedings, which both Fasken and Texas did; federal courts

² *See, e.g., Ohio Nuclear-Free Network v. NRC*, 53 F.4th 236, 239 (D.C. Cir. 2022); *NRDC v NRC*, 823 F.3d 641, 643 (D.C. Cir. 2016); *State ex rel. Balderas v NRC*, 59 F.4th 1112, 1117 (10th Cir. 2023). In *Balderas*, the court denied review to New Mexico, which had submitted comments only on the environmental impact statement issued after the licensure. That decision is distinguishable at least from Fasken’s position.

should not be bound to defer to varying agency rules and procedures to interpret this singular statutory language—whose purpose after all is to facilitate judicial review. NRC admits that the panel correctly noted judicial consensus that the “degree of participation necessary to achieve party status varies according to the formality with which the proceeding is conducted.” Federal Respondents’ Pet. for Reh’g En Banc at 7. Consequently, according to the nature of the proceedings, the *fact* and *scope* of the petitioner’s “participation” should be determinative for judicial review, not the NRC’s denial of “participation” to Fasken. NRC’s insistence on strict compliance with its intervention rules is rather bold, not only from the standpoint of eliminating judicial review, but also because NRC quotes the statute that the Commission “*shall* admit any such person as a party...” *Id.*

And to the point that this decision has “created” a circuit conflict, we disagree in part. These petitioners satisfy “party aggrieved” status under the numerous cases that apply a broader standard of “participation.” There is no circuit conflict with such cases. The conflict here is with the *Balderas* decision’s denial of New Mexico’s standing to challenge the ISP license. Inasmuch as the conflict is about statutory standing to appeal, a finding of standing means that our court will perform its duty of judicial review.

In light of the split of authorities, is “party aggrieved” status an issue of overarching significance? Not at all. The Hobbs Act jurisdictional provision is rarely debated, as anyone trying to research this term will quickly ascertain. This is likely for a couple of reasons. First, much agency activity covered by the

Hobbs Act is conducted in a closed circle of experts, lobbyists and lawyers well familiar with the rules and proclivities of the administrators; therefore, arguments over statutory standing seldom arise. Second, with “participation” as the bottom line from a judicial standpoint,³ which is also the baseline of D.C. court opinions (albeit with varying applications of the term), substantive judicial review occurs only where “parties” have actually “participated” in the challenged proceedings. Fasken and Texas were no strangers to NRC here. Indeed, the NWPA specifically required “consultation” with the states before siting of spent nuclear fuel may occur anywhere.⁴⁴ That provision as well should have garnered Texas “party aggrieved” status.

For these reasons, the panel decision is comfortably footed on statutory standing under the Hobbs Act.

2. The *Ultra Vires* Exception to the “Party Aggrieved” Requirement

Even if Texas and Fasken were not “parties aggrieved” under the Hobbs Act, the panel nevertheless had jurisdiction to hear their appeal. As explained in the opinion, this court has long recognized an exception to the “party aggrieved” requirement regarding

³ D.C. court opinions also reasonably foreclose *de minimis* participation as a basis for Hobbs Act judicial review. *See ACA Int’l*, 885 F.3d at 711; *Water Transp. Ass’n*, 819 F.2d at 1192–93.

⁴ 42 U.S.C. § 10155(d)(1)-(2) requires the Department of Energy to exercise very limited interim storage of spent nuclear fuel through “a cooperative agreement under which [the] *State...shall have the right* to participate in a process of consultation and cooperation”(emphasis added). Needless to say, no such consultation or cooperation occurred here.

challenges to the lawfulness of the agency's action. Texas and Fasken each argued that the NRC's actions were unauthorized either by the AEA or the NWPA. *Texas*, 78 F.4th at 839–40. Accordingly, the panel relied on the rule that “a person may appeal an agency action even if not a party to the original agency proceeding . . . if the agency action is attacked as exceeding [its] power” or if the appellant “challenges the constitutionality of the statute conferring authority on the agency.” *Am. Trucking Associations, Inc. v. ICC*, 673 F.2d 82, 85 n.4 (5th Cir. 1982); *accord Wales Transp., Inc. v. ICC*, 728 F.2d 774, 776 n.1 (5th Cir. 1984).

Texas and Fasken challenged the lawfulness of the NRC's actions and the legality of the NRC's conduct. But this court's exception to the “party-aggrieved” requirement is criticized as a relic of ages past that perished in the early 1980s. Of course, the Supreme Court has not overruled our *ultra vires* exception, and this court has recognized its existence in at least two more recent cases. *See Baros v. Tex. Mexican Ry. Co.*, 400 F.3d 228, 238 n.24 (5th Cir. 2005) (noting other courts' disagreement); *Merchants Fast Motor Lines, Inc. v. ICC*, 5 F.3d 911, 922 (5th Cir. 1993).⁵

⁵ To be sure, other courts have rejected applying *ultra vires* review in cases involving the Hobbs Act. *See Balderas*, 59 F.4th at 1123–24; *Nat'l Ass'n Of State Util. Consumer Advocates*, 457 F.3d at 1249; *Erie-Niagara Rail Steering Comm. v. Surface Transp. Bd.*, 167 F.3d 111, 112–13 (2d Cir. 1999); *Matter of Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific R. Co.*, 799 F.2d 317, 334–35 (7th Cir. 1986).

Three reasons are posited to overrule *ultra vires* jurisdiction to review the statutory or constitutional basis for agency actions. First, it is contended that our court decisions crafted the rule based on cases that predate Congress’s bringing the ICC within the ambit of the Hobbs Act. That is just wrong. *Wales* and *American Trucking* both postdate Hobbs Act review of ICC actions *and* cite the Hobbs Act. There is no ground to attribute our courts’ decisions to judicial mistakes, and consequently, *Wales* and *American Trucking* can be reconciled as to both holdings.

Second, this court’s *ultra vires* exception was not made out of whole cloth. A similar rule is acknowledged by the Supreme Court, this court, and our sister circuits in various contexts. *See, e.g., Leedom v. Kyne*, 358 U.S. 184, 190, 79 S. Ct. 180, 185 (1958) (“This Court cannot lightly infer that Congress does not intend judicial protection of rights it confers against agency action taken in excess of delegated powers.”);⁶ *Kirby Corp.*, 109 F.3d at 269 (acknowledging “judicial review is proper under the rule set forth in *Kyne*, despite there being a statutory provision prohibiting such review, because the agency’s challenged action is so contrary to the terms of the relevant statute that it necessitates judicial review independent of the review provisions of the relevant statute”); *see also, e.g., Long Term Care Partners, LLC v. United States*, 516 F.3d

⁶ The parties did not cite *Leedom*, and I agree that the Supreme Court clarified its application in *Bd. of Governors of Fed. Reserve Sys. v. MCorp Fin., Inc.*, 502 U.S. 32, 112 S. Ct. 459 (1991). Nonetheless, *Leedom* represents the principle that the Article III courts are not totally closed to plaintiffs who claim agency action has violated the agency’s statutory mandate or the Constitution.

225, 233 (4th Cir. 2008) (recognizing there is “a non-statutory exception to the [APA] § 704 finality requirement in cases in which agencies act outside the scope of their delegated powers and contrary to ‘clear and mandatory’ statutory prohibitions”); *Rhode Island Dep’t of Envtl. Mgmt.*, 304 F.3d at 42 (“[E]ven after the passage of the APA, some residuum of power remains with the district court to review agency action that is *ultra vires*.”); *Chamber of Commerce of U.S. v. Reich*, 74 F.3d 1322, 1330–31 (D.C. Cir. 1996) (“The procurement power must be exercised consistently with the structure and purposes of the statute that delegates that power. . . . It does not follow, then, that the President’s broad authority under the Procurement Act precludes judicial review of executive action for conformity with that statute—let alone review to determine whether that action violates another statute.” (citation and quotations omitted)). Courts apply this exception for good reason. Indeed, “[w]ere such unauthorized [agency] actions to go unchecked, chaos would plainly result.” *Dart*, 848 F.2d at 224. Thus, “[w]hen an executive acts *ultra vires*, courts are normally available to reestablish the limits on his authority.” *Id.*

Third, two additional misconceptions should be dispelled. The first is that the *ultra vires* exception means no more than that an agency “got it wrong” per APA standards. See *Matter of Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific R. Co.*, 799 F.2d 317, 334-35 (7th Cir. 1986). That is plainly not what *Wales* and *American Trucking* stand for. Instead, and as the above cases demonstrate, the term literally refers to being “outside” the agency’s power, *i.e.*, in defiance of the limits placed by Congress in the agency’s governing statute

or the Constitution. None of the cases cited above have misunderstood this term or misapplied the rule to challenges involving less than an absence of statutory or constitutional authority. The “got it wrong” criticism is misleading hyperbole. Second, we need not speculate about any limits on who can challenge agency action as *ultra vires*, because in this case there is no doubt whatsoever about the petitioners’ Article III standing. Nor is there doubt that NRC’s rejection of “party aggrieved” status, if that were to be decided, has denied them any other avenue of redress.

If ever there were a case in which an agency acted *ultra vires*, it should be this case. And these petitioners should have Hobbs Act standing to contest the NRC’s illegal licensing.

STEPHEN A. HIGGINSON, *Circuit Judge*, joined by GRAVES, DOUGLAS, and RAMIREZ, *Circuit Judges*, dissenting from denial of rehearing en banc:

To hold that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission lacked authority to license private, away-from-reactor storage of spent nuclear fuel without a clear delegation from Congress, the panel disregarded a clear limitation that Congress imposed on our own authority.

Through the Hobbs Act, Congress provided for judicial review of a Nuclear Regulatory Commission “final order entered in any proceeding” under the Atomic Energy Act “for the granting, suspending, revoking, or amending of any license.” 42 U.S.C. § 2239(b)(1), (a)(1)(A). But, like challenges to all agency actions governed by the Hobbs Act, Congress limited jurisdiction to where “[a]ny party aggrieved by the final order” seeks judicial review of the order. 28 U.S.C. § 2344. The panel erred when it ignored this limitation, deepening one circuit split that arose from our court’s atextual dicta in a footnote over forty years ago and threatening to create another with new, troubling dicta of its own.

This exercise of jurisdiction has grave consequences for regulated entities’ settled expectations and careful investments in costly, time-consuming agency proceedings, inviting spoilers to sidestep the avenues for participation that Congress carefully created to prevent this uncertainty. *See Amicus Nuclear Energy Institute Br. 4-7*. And it does so across a wide range of industries—including agriculture, transportation, development, and communications—because the Hobbs Act’s exclusive jurisdiction provision

governs actions taken by many agencies. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 2342(1)–(7).

I.

This case concerns a license issued by the Commission to a private company, Interim Storage Partners, for operation of a temporary, away-from-reactor spent nuclear fuel storage facility in Andrews County, Texas. Two private entities—Permian Basin Land and Royalty Owners and for-profit oil and gas extraction organization Fasken Land and Minerals (collectively, “Fasken”)—sought to intervene in the licensing proceeding but were denied. Their petitions for review in the D.C. Circuit of the orders denying intervention were either dismissed or denied. *Don’t Waste Michigan v. NRC*, No. 21-1048, 2023 WL 395030, at *1–3 (D.C. Cir. Jan. 25, 2023) (per curiam). Texas never sought to intervene in the licensing proceeding. Instead, it sent letters to the Commission both during a public comment period on a draft environmental impact statement performed on the license and after Texas passed a law prohibiting storage of spent nuclear fuel.

Fasken and Texas petitioned for review of the license in this court and licensee Interim Storage Partners intervened. Texas argued, as relevant here, that the license should be vacated because the Commission does not have the authority to license private entities for temporary, away-from-reactor storage of spent nuclear fuel. The panel concluded that it had jurisdiction under the Hobbs Act, granted the petitions for review, and vacated the license. *Texas v. NRC*, 78 F.4th 827, 837–40, 844 (5th Cir. 2023).

The panel suggested that, while neither Fasken nor Texas were parties in the licensing proceeding that produced the challenged order, it may be that “participat[ion]—in some way—in the agency proceedings, which Texas did through comments and Fasken did by seeking intervention and filing contentions,” was sufficient. *Id.* at 838. But the panel rested its assertion of jurisdiction on our court’s “*ultra vires* exception to the party-aggrieved status requirement.” *Id.* at 839. Under the exception, there are “two rare instances’ where a ‘person may appeal an agency action even if not a party to the original agency proceeding’—(1) where ‘the agency action is attacked as exceeding [its] power’ and (2) where the person ‘challenges the constitutionality of the statute conferring authority on the agency.’” *Id.* (quoting *Am. Trucking Ass’ns v. ICC*, 673 F.2d 82, 85 n.4 (5th Cir. 1982) (per curiam)). The panel concluded that two of the challenges attacked the Commission as exceeding its power: Texas’s argument that “the Commission lacks the statutory authority to license the facility” and Fasken’s argument that “the Commission violated the National Environmental Policy Act and Administrative Procedure Act by allowing a licensing condition that violates the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.” *Id.* at 839–40.

II.

Lest troubling dicta again be elevated to binding precedent without examination, I write first to explain why the panel is wrong to suggest, without so holding, that Texas and Fasken might be “part[ies] aggrieved” under the plain text of the Hobbs Act. The panel intimates that requiring that a “party

aggrieved” be a party to the underlying proceeding here would “impose an extra-textual gloss by requiring a degree of participation not contemplated in the plain text of the statute.” *Id.* at 839. But giving effect to the words that Congress chose—and refusing to read in words that it did not choose—does no such thing.

The Hobbs Act’s narrow, exclusive-jurisdiction provision limits review to those petitioners who are a “party aggrieved by the final order,” 28 U.S.C. § 2344, in contrast with the broader judicial review provision of the Administrative Procedure Act under which a “person” “aggrieved by agency action” may petition for review, 5 U.S.C. § 702. I don’t disagree that party status, because the Hobbs Act encompasses a variety of agency actions, turns on the nature of the agency proceedings. But in these proceedings the answer is clear. With the Atomic Energy Act, Congress carefully delineated the only process by which the Commission could make a “person” a “party” in the licensing proceeding context: “[T]he Commission shall grant a hearing upon the request of any person whose interest may be affected by the proceeding, and shall admit any such person as a party to such proceeding.” 42 U.S.C. § 2239(a)(1)(A).¹ Where the Commission denies a

¹ Indeed, Congress relied on the “person” versus “party” distinction throughout the Atomic Energy Act. For example, after the conclusion of certain licensing proceedings for the construction of plants, the Commission must publish a notice of intended operation before fuel is loaded into the plant so that “any person whose interest may be affected by operation of the plant, may within 60 days request the Commission to hold a hearing on whether” the construction complies with the license. *Id.* § 2239(a)(1)(B)(i). This distinction made by Congress

person's attempt to become a *party*—that is, where the Commission denies intervention—Congress provided for judicial review of that denial under the Hobbs Act. *Id.* § 2239(b)(1). Pursuant to this congressionally devised process, Fasken sought to become a party to the proceeding and, when the Commission denied intervention, obtained full review of that denial in the D.C. Circuit. *Don't Waste Michigan*, 2023 WL 395030, at *1–3. Texas never sought to become a party.

Without the answer that Congress supplied, the panel relied on what it guessed Congress intended as “the function of the ‘party aggrieved’ status requirement.” *NRC*, 78 F.4th at 838. This put the panel in the more difficult position of attempting to discern what degree of participation in the agency proceeding was enough. *Id.* at 838–39. But no such inquiry is required here or even permitted because, in the context of Commission licensing proceedings, Congress has answered the question already.

III.

The panel rested its assertion of jurisdiction, with neither merits endorsement nor analysis, on this court's judge-made, *ultra vires* exception to Congress's jurisdictional limitation. *Id.* at 839–40. Because courts have “no authority to create equitable exceptions to jurisdictional requirements,” *Bowles v. Russell*, 551 U.S. 205, 214 (2007), the exception should be eliminated.

contemplates that a person may not be party to a licensing proceeding for a plant's construction but may later challenge whether subsequent construction complies with the license.

This court, in dicta in a footnote over forty years ago, asserted that the Hobbs Act’s “party aggrieved” requirement does not limit review where “the agency action is attacked as exceeding [its] power.” *Am. Trucking Ass’ns*, 673 F.2d at 85 n.4 (internal quotation marks and citation omitted).² That assertion, though made in 1982, relied exclusively on Interstate Commerce Commission cases from 1968 and earlier—seven years before Congress brought judicial review of that body’s orders within the ambit of the Hobbs Act. See Pub. L. No. 93-584, §§ 3, 4, 88 Stat. 1917 (1975). As the Second Circuit explained, the exception “rests upon” these “pre-1975 cases” “without any acknowledgment of the intervening change in governing procedure” and with “no compelling support for the proposition that, despite the plain statutory language to the contrary, such petitions remain valid today.” *Erie-Niagara Rail Steering Comm. v. Surface. Transp. Bd.*, 167 F.3d 111, 112 (2d Cir. 1999) (per curiam).

No other circuit has adopted our court’s exception to the Hobbs Act, and four circuits have rejected it. *Balderas v. NRC*, 59 F. 4th 1112, 1123–24 (10th Cir.

² This was never explained as an outgrowth of the much narrower exception that the Supreme Court recognized in *Leedom v. Kyne*, 358 U.S. 184, 190 (1958). There, the Supreme Court explained that “the inference would be strong that Congress intended the statutory provisions governing . . . general jurisdiction . . . to control” where “there is no other means” to “protect and enforce” a “right” that Congress has created. *Id.* (internal quotation marks and citations omitted). But the Court has underscored that this narrow exception does not apply where there is a “meaningful and adequate opportunity for judicial review.” *Bd. of Governors of Fed. Rsrv. Sys. v. MCorp Fin., Inc.*, 502 U.S. 32, 43 (1991). Nor does it apply where Congress has spoken “clearly and directly” to judicial review. *Id.* at 44.

2023); *Nat'l Ass'n of State Util. Consumer Advocs. v. FCC*, 457 F.3d 1238, 1249 (11th Cir. 2006) (Pryor, J.), *modified on other grounds on denial of reh'g*, 468 F.3d 1272 (11th Cir. 2006); *Erie-Niagara Rail Steering Comm.*, 167 F.3d at 112–13; *In re Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pac. R.R.*, 799 F.2d 317, 334–35 (7th Cir. 1986) (Easterbrook, J.). Indeed, the Tenth Circuit in *Balderas* rejected the exception when New Mexico invoked it to challenge the same license at issue here. 59 F. 4th at 1123–24. In the Seventh Circuit, Judge Easterbrook explained that our court's atextual exception reads out the "party" limitation that Congress imposed because "exceeding the power' of the agency may be a synonym for 'wrong,' so that the statute then precludes review only when there is no reason for review anyway." *In re Chicago*, 799 F.2d at 335.

Parsing which merits arguments here fall under our court's *ultra vires* exception shows its unworkability—and the risk for judicial aggrandizement when courts can pick and choose when to abide by Congress's limits. The panel concluded that it had jurisdiction over Fasken's argument that "the Commission violated the National Environmental Policy Act and Administrative Procedure Act by allowing a licensing condition that violates the Nuclear Waste Policy Act" because the argument "centers on the contention that the Commission acted beyond its statutory authority by issuing a license with a condition expressly prohibited by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act." *NRC*, 78 F.4th at 840. But this asks judges to speculate about what a petitioner's challenges are *really* about to decide whether Congress's clear jurisdictional limitation on their power to hear cases *really* applies.

The panel concluded that it had jurisdiction over Texas’s argument that “the Commission lacks the statutory authority to license the facility” because that argument “attacks the Commission for licensing a facility without the authority to do so under the Atomic Energy Act, and in conflict with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.” *Id.* at 839–40. The panel, however, determined that it lacked jurisdiction over Texas’s arguments that “the license issuance violated the Administrative Procedure Act” (unlike, inexplicably, Fasken’s Administrative Procedure Act challenge) and the “National Environmental Policy Act by failing to assess the risks of a potential terrorist attack.” *Id.* But why are these latter two not also “attack[s]” on the “agency action” as “exceeding [its] power”? *Am. Trucking Ass’ns*, 673 F.2d at 85 n.4. An agency exceeds its power whenever it violates the law. That includes when, for example, its action is “arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with law.” 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A). Our exception reads out the difference, discussed above, that Congress created between broader judicial review under the Administrative Procedure Act and narrower judicial review under the Hobbs Act. And “[t]he merits of that policy are for the Congress rather than us to determine.” *Simmons v. Interstate Commerce Comm’n*, 716 F.2d 40, 43 (D.C. Cir. 1983) (Scalia, J.).

* * *

For these reasons, I respectfully dissent from denial of rehearing en banc.

APPENDIX C

28 U.S.C. § 2342

§ 2342. Jurisdiction of court of appeals

Effective: October 6, 2006

The court of appeals (other than the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit) has exclusive jurisdiction to enjoin, set aside, suspend (in whole or in part), or to determine the validity of—

- (1)** all final orders of the Federal Communications Commission made reviewable by section 402(a) of title 47;
- (2)** all final orders of the Secretary of Agriculture made under chapters 9 and 20A of title 7, except orders issued under sections 210(e), 217a, and 499g(a) of title 7;
- (3)** all rules, regulations, or final orders of—
 - (A)** the Secretary of Transportation issued pursuant to section 50501, 50502, 56101-56104, or 57109 of title 46 or pursuant to part B or C of subtitle IV, subchapter III of chapter 311, chapter 313, or chapter 315 of title 49; and
 - (B)** the Federal Maritime Commission issued pursuant to section 305, 41304, 41308, or 41309 or chapter 421 or 441 of title 46;
- (4)** all final orders of the Atomic Energy Commission made reviewable by section 2239 of title 42;
- (5)** all rules, regulations, or final orders of the Surface Transportation Board made reviewable by section 2321 of this title;

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(6) all final orders under section 812 of the Fair Housing Act; and

(7) all final agency actions described in section 20114(c) of title 49.

Jurisdiction is invoked by filing a petition as provided by section 2344 of this title.

28 U.S.C. § 2344

§ 2344. Review of orders; time; notice; contents of petition; service

On the entry of a final order reviewable under this chapter, the agency shall promptly give notice thereof by service or publication in accordance with its rules. Any party aggrieved by the final order may, within 60 days after its entry, file a petition to review the order in the court of appeals wherein venue lies. The action shall be against the United States. The petition shall contain a concise statement of—

- (1) the nature of the proceedings as to which review is sought;
- (2) the facts on which venue is based;
- (3) the grounds on which relief is sought; and
- (4) the relief prayed.

The petitioner shall attach to the petition, as exhibits, copies of the order, report, or decision of the agency. The clerk shall serve a true copy of the petition on the agency and on the Attorney General by registered mail, with request for a return receipt.

42 U.S.C. § 2011

§ 2011. Congressional declaration of policy

Atomic energy is capable of application for peaceful as well as military purposes. It is therefore declared to be the policy of the United States that—

(a) the development, use, and control of atomic energy shall be directed so as to make the maximum contribution to the general welfare, subject at all times to the paramount objective of making the maximum contribution to the common defense and security; and

(b) the development, use, and control of atomic energy shall be directed so as to promote world peace, improve the general welfare, increase the standard of living, and strengthen free competition in private enterprise.

42 U.S.C. § 2012

§ 2012. Congressional findings

The Congress of the United States makes the following findings concerning the development, use, and control of atomic energy:

- (a)** The development, utilization, and control of atomic energy for military and for all other purposes are vital to the common defense and security.
- (b)** Repealed. Pub.L. 88-489, § 1, Aug. 26, 1964, 78 Stat. 602
- (c)** The processing and utilization of source, byproduct, and special nuclear material affect interstate and foreign commerce and must be regulated in the national interest.
- (d)** The processing and utilization of source, byproduct, and special nuclear material must be regulated in the national interest and in order to provide for the common defense and security and to protect the health and safety of the public.
- (e)** Source and special nuclear material, production facilities, and utilization facilities are affected with the public interest, and regulation by the United States of the production and utilization of atomic energy and of the facilities used in connection therewith is necessary in the national interest to assure the common defense and security and to protect the health and safety of the public.
- (f)** The necessity for protection against possible interstate damage occurring from the operation of facilities for the production or utilization of source or special nuclear material places the operation of

those facilities in interstate commerce for the purposes of this chapter.

(g) Funds of the United States may be provided for the development and use of atomic energy under conditions which will provide for the common defense and security and promote the general welfare.

(h) Repealed. Pub.L. 88-489, § 2, Aug. 26, 1964, 78 Stat. 602

(i) In order to protect the public and to encourage the development of the atomic energy industry, in the interest of the general welfare and of the common defense and security, the United States may make funds available for a portion of the damages suffered by the public from nuclear incidents, and may limit the liability of those persons liable for such losses.

42 U.S.C. § 2013

§ 2013. Purpose of chapter

It is the purpose of this chapter to effectuate the policies set forth above by providing for—

- (a)** a program of conducting, assisting, and fostering research and development in order to encourage maximum scientific and industrial progress;
- (b)** a program for the dissemination of unclassified scientific and technical information and for the control, dissemination, and declassification of Restricted Data, subject to appropriate safeguards, so as to encourage scientific and industrial progress;
- (c)** a program for Government control of the possession, use, and production of atomic energy and special nuclear material, whether owned by the Government or others, so directed as to make the maximum contribution to the common defense and security and the national welfare, and to provide continued assurance of the Government's ability to enter into and enforce agreements with nations or groups of nations for the control of special nuclear materials and atomic weapons;
- (d)** a program to encourage widespread participation in the development and utilization of atomic energy for peaceful purposes to the maximum extent consistent with the common defense and security and with the health and safety of the public;
- (e)** a program of international cooperation to promote the common defense and security and to make available to cooperating nations the benefits of peaceful applications of atomic energy as widely as

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expanding technology and considerations of the common defense and security will permit; and

(f) a program of administration which will be consistent with the foregoing policies and programs, with international arrangements, and with agreements for cooperation, which will enable the Congress to be currently informed so as to take further legislative action as may be appropriate.

42 U.S.C. § 2014

§ 2014. Definitions

Effective: March 23, 2024

The intent of Congress in the definitions as given in this section should be construed from the words or phrases used in the definitions. As used in this chapter:

(a) The term “agency of the United States” means the executive branch of the United States, or any Government agency, or the legislative branch of the United States, or any agency, committee, commission, office, or other establishment in the legislative branch, or the judicial branch of the United States, or any office, agency, committee, commission, or other establishment in the judicial branch.

(b) The term “agreement for cooperation” means any agreement with another nation or regional defense organization authorized or permitted by sections 2074, 2077, 2094, 2112, 2121(c), 2133, 2134, or 2164 of this title, and made pursuant to section 2153 of this title.

(c) The term “atomic energy” means all forms of energy released in the course of nuclear fission or nuclear transformation.

(d) The term “atomic weapon” means any device utilizing atomic energy, exclusive of the means for transporting or propelling the device (where such means is a separable and divisible part of the device), the principal purpose of which is for use as, or for development of, a weapon, a weapon prototype, or a weapon test device.

(e) The term “byproduct material” means—

(1) any radioactive material (except special nuclear material) yielded in or made radioactive by exposure to the radiation incident to the process of producing or utilizing special nuclear material;

(2) the tailings or wastes produced by the extraction or concentration of uranium or thorium from any ore processed primarily for its source material content;

(3)(A) any discrete source of radium-226 that is produced, extracted, or converted after extraction, before, on, or after August 8, 2005, for use for a commercial, medical, or research activity; or

(B) any material that—

(i) has been made radioactive by use of a particle accelerator; and

(ii) is produced, extracted, or converted after extraction, before, on, or after August 8, 2005, for use for a commercial, medical, or research activity; and

(4) any discrete source of naturally occurring radioactive material, other than source material, that—

(A) the Commission, in consultation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the head of any other appropriate Federal agency, determines would pose a threat similar to the threat posed by a discrete source of radium-226 to the public health

and safety or the common defense and security;
and

(B) before, on, or after August 8, 2005, is extracted or converted after extraction for use in a commercial, medical, or research activity.

(f) The term “Commission” means the Atomic Energy Commission.

(g) The term “common defense and security” means the common defense and security of the United States.

(h) The term “defense information” means any information in any category determined by any Government agency authorized to classify information, as being information respecting, relating to, or affecting the national defense.

(i) The term “design” means (1) specifications, plans, drawings, blueprints, and other items of like nature; (2) the information contained therein; or (3) the research and development data pertinent to the information contained therein.

(j) The term “extraordinary nuclear occurrence” means any event causing a discharge or dispersal of source, special nuclear, or byproduct material from its intended place of confinement in amounts offsite, or causing radiation levels offsite, which the Nuclear Regulatory Commission or the Secretary of Energy, as appropriate, determines to be substantial, and which the Nuclear Regulatory Commission or the Secretary of Energy, as appropriate, determines has resulted or will probably result in substantial damages to persons offsite or property offsite. Any determination by the Nuclear

Regulatory Commission or the Secretary of Energy, as appropriate, that such an event has, or has not, occurred shall be final and conclusive, and no other official or any court shall have power or jurisdiction to review any such determination. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission or the Secretary of Energy, as appropriate, shall establish criteria in writing setting forth the basis upon which such determination shall be made. As used in this subsection, “offsite” means away from “the location” or “the contract location” as defined in the applicable Nuclear Regulatory Commission or the Secretary of Energy, as appropriate, indemnity agreement, entered into pursuant to section 2210 of this title.

(k) The term “financial protection” means the ability to respond in damages for public liability and to meet the costs of investigating and defending claims and settling suits for such damages.

(l) The term “Government agency” means any executive department, commission, independent establishment, corporation, wholly or partly owned by the United States of America which is an instrumentality of the United States, or any board, bureau, division, service, office, officer, authority, administration, or other establishment in the executive branch of the Government.

(m) The term “indemnitor” means (1) any insurer with respect to his obligations under a policy of insurance furnished as proof of financial protection; (2) any licensee, contractor or other person who is obligated under any other form of financial protection, with respect to such obligations; and (3) the Nuclear Regulatory Commission or the Secretary of

Energy, as appropriate, with respect to any obligation undertaken by it in an indemnity agreement entered into pursuant to section 2210 of this title.

(n) The term “international arrangement” means any international agreement hereafter approved by the Congress or any treaty during the time such agreement or treaty is in full force and effect, but does not include any agreement for cooperation.

(o) The term “Energy Committees” means the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives.

(p) The term “licensed activity” means an activity licensed pursuant to this chapter and covered by the provisions of section 2210(a) of this title.

(q) The term “nuclear incident” means any occurrence, including an extraordinary nuclear occurrence, within the United States causing, within or outside the United States, bodily injury, sickness, disease, or death, or loss of or damage to property, or loss of use of property, arising out of or resulting from the radioactive, toxic, explosive, or other hazardous properties of source, special nuclear, or by-product material: *Provided, however,* That as the term is used in section 2210(l) of this title, it shall include any such occurrence outside the United States: *And provided further,* That as the term is used in section 2210(d) of this title, it shall include any such occurrence outside the United States: *And provided further,* That as the term is used in section 2210(c) of this title, it shall include any such occurrence outside both the United States and any other nation if such occurrence arises out of or results

from the radioactive, toxic, explosive, or other hazardous properties of source, special nuclear, or by-product material licensed pursuant to subchapters V, VI, VII, and IX of this division, which is used in connection with the operation of a licensed stationary production or utilization facility or which moves outside the territorial limits of the United States in transit from one person licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to another person licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

(r) The term “operator” means any individual who manipulates the controls of a utilization or production facility.

(s) The term “person” means (1) any individual, corporation, partnership, firm, association, trust, estate, public or private institution, group, Government agency other than the Commission, any State or any political subdivision of, or any political entity within a State, any foreign government or nation or any political subdivision of any such government or nation, or other entity; and (2) any legal successor, representative, agent, or agency of the foregoing.

(t) The term “person indemnified” means (1) with respect to a nuclear incident occurring within the United States or outside the United States as the term is used in section 2210(c) of this title, and with respect to any nuclear incident in connection with the design, development, construction, operation, repair, maintenance, or use of the nuclear ship Savannah, the person with whom an indemnity agreement is executed or who is required to maintain financial protection, and any other person who may be liable for public liability or (2) with respect to any

other nuclear incident occurring outside the United States, the person with whom an indemnity agreement is executed and any other person who may be liable for public liability by reason of his activities under any contract with the Secretary of Energy or any project to which indemnification under the provisions of section 2210(d) of this title has been extended or under any subcontract, purchase order, or other agreement, of any tier, under any such contract or project.

(u) The term “produce”, when used in relation to special nuclear material, means (1) to manufacture, make, produce, or refine special nuclear material; (2) to separate special nuclear material from other substances in which such material may be contained; or (3) to make or to produce new special nuclear material.

(v) The term “production facility” means (1) any equipment or device determined by rule of the Commission to be capable of the production of special nuclear material in such quantity as to be of significance to the common defense and security, or in such manner as to affect the health and safety of the public; or (2) any important component part especially designed for such equipment or device as determined by the Commission. Except with respect to the export of a uranium enrichment production facility, such term as used in subchapters IX and XV shall not include any equipment or device (or important component part especially designed for such equipment or device) capable of separating the isotopes of uranium or enriching uranium in the isotope 235.

(w) The term “public liability” means any legal liability arising out of or resulting from a nuclear incident or precautionary evacuation (including all reasonable additional costs incurred by a State, or a political subdivision of a State, in the course of responding to a nuclear incident or a precautionary evacuation), except: (i) claims under State or Federal workmen’s compensation acts of employees of persons indemnified who are employed at the site of and in connection with the activity where the nuclear incident occurs; (ii) claims arising out of an act of war; and (iii) whenever used in subsections (a), (c), and (k) of section 2210 of this title, claims for loss of, or damage to, or loss of use of property which is located at the site of and used in connection with the licensed activity where the nuclear incident occurs. “Public liability” also includes damage to property of persons indemnified: *Provided*, That such property is covered under the terms of the financial protection required, except property which is located at the site of and used in connection with the activity where the nuclear incident occurs.

(x) The term “research and development” means (1) theoretical analysis, exploration, or experimentation; or (2) the extension of investigative findings and theories of a scientific or technical nature into practical application for experimental and demonstration purposes, including the experimental production and testing of models, devices, equipment, materials, and processes.

(y) The term “Restricted Data” means all data concerning (1) design, manufacture, or utilization of atomic weapons; (2) the production of special

nuclear material; or (3) the use of special nuclear material in the production of energy, but shall not include data declassified or removed from the Restricted Data category pursuant to section 2162 of this title.

(z) The term “source material” means (1) uranium, thorium, or any other material which is determined by the Commission pursuant to the provisions of section 2091 of this title to be source material; or (2) ores containing one or more of the foregoing materials, in such concentration as the Commission may by regulation determine from time to time.

(aa) The term “special nuclear material” means (1) plutonium, uranium enriched in the isotope 233 or in the isotope 235, and any other material which the Commission, pursuant to the provisions of section 2071 of this title, determines to be special nuclear material, but does not include source material; or (2) any material artificially enriched by any of the foregoing, but does not include source material.

(bb) The term “United States” when used in a geographical sense includes all territories and possessions of the United States, the Canal Zone and Puerto Rico.

(cc) The term “utilization facility” means (1) any equipment or device, except an atomic weapon, determined by rule of the Commission to be capable of making use of special nuclear material in such quantity as to be of significance to the common defense and security, or in such manner as to affect the health and safety of the public, or peculiarly adapted for making use of atomic energy in such quantity as to be of significance to the common defense and

security, or in such manner as to affect the health and safety of the public; or (2) any important component part especially designed for such equipment or device as determined by the Commission.

(dd) The terms “high-level radioactive waste” and “spent nuclear fuel” have the meanings given such terms in section 10101 of this title.

(ee) The term “transuranic waste” means material contaminated with elements that have an atomic number greater than 92, including neptunium, plutonium, americium, and curium, and that are in concentrations greater than 10 nanocuries per gram, or in such other concentrations as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission may prescribe to protect the public health and safety.

(ff) The term “nuclear waste activities”, as used in section 2210 of this title, means activities subject to an agreement of indemnification under subsection (d) of such section, that the Secretary of Energy is authorized to undertake, under this chapter or any other law, involving the storage, handling, transportation, treatment, or disposal of, or research and development on, spent nuclear fuel, high-level radioactive waste, or transuranic waste, including (but not limited to) activities authorized to be carried out under the Waste Isolation Pilot Project under section 213 of Public Law 96-164 (93 Stat. 1265).

(gg) The term “precautionary evacuation” means an evacuation of the public within a specified area near a nuclear facility, or the transportation route in the case of an accident involving transportation of source material, special nuclear material, byproduct material, high-level radioactive waste, spent

nuclear fuel, or transuranic waste to or from a production or utilization facility, if the evacuation is—

(1) the result of any event that is not classified as a nuclear incident but that poses imminent danger of bodily injury or property damage from the radiological properties of source material, special nuclear material, byproduct material, high-level radioactive waste, spent nuclear fuel, or transuranic waste, and causes an evacuation; and

(2) initiated by an official of a State or a political subdivision of a State, who is authorized by State law to initiate such an evacuation and who reasonably determined that such an evacuation was necessary to protect the public health and safety.

(hh) The term “public liability action”, as used in section 2210 of this title, means any suit asserting public liability. A public liability action shall be deemed to be an action arising under section 2210 of this title, and the substantive rules for decision in such action shall be derived from the law of the State in which the nuclear incident involved occurs, unless such law is inconsistent with the provisions of such section.

(jj)¹ Legal Costs

As used in section 2210 of this title, the term “legal costs” means the costs incurred by a plaintiff or a defendant in initiating, prosecuting, investigating, settling, or defending claims or suits for damage arising under such section.

¹ So in original. No subsec. (ii) has been enacted.

42 U.S.C. § 2073**§ 2073. Domestic distribution of special nuclear material****(a) Licenses**

The Commission is authorized (i) to issue licenses to transfer or receive in interstate commerce, transfer, deliver, acquire, possess, own, receive possession of or title to, import, or export under the terms of an agreement for cooperation arranged pursuant to section 2153 of this title, special nuclear material, (ii) to make special nuclear material available for the period of the license, and, (iii) to distribute special nuclear material within the United States to qualified applicants requesting such material—

- (1)** for the conduct of research and development activities of the types specified in section 2051 of this title;
- (2)** for use in the conduct of research and development activities or in medical therapy under a license issued pursuant to section 2134 of this title;
- (3)** for use under a license issued pursuant to section 2133 of this title;
- (4)** for such other uses as the Commission determines to be appropriate to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

(b) Minimum criteria for licenses

The Commission shall establish, by rule, minimum criteria for the issuance of specific or general licenses for the distribution of special nuclear material depending upon the degree of importance to the common

defense and security or to the health and safety of the public of—

- (1) the physical characteristics of the special nuclear material to be distributed;
- (2) the quantities of special nuclear material to be distributed; and
- (3) the intended use of the special nuclear material to be distributed.

(c) Manner of distribution; charges for material sold; agreements; charges for material leased

(1) The Commission may distribute special nuclear material licensed under this section by sale, lease, lease with option to buy, or grant: *Provided, however,* That unless otherwise authorized by law, the Commission shall not after December 31, 1970, distribute special nuclear material except by sale to any person who possesses or operates a utilization facility under a license issued pursuant to section 2133 or 2134(b) of this title for use in the course of activities under such license; nor shall the Commission permit any such person after June 30, 1973, to continue leasing for use in the course of such activities special nuclear material previously leased to such person by the Commission.

(2) The Commission shall establish reasonable sales prices for the special nuclear material licensed and distributed by sale under this section. Such sales prices shall be established on a nondiscriminatory basis which, in the opinion of the Commission, will provide reasonable compensation to the Government for such special nuclear material.

(3) The Commission is authorized to enter into agreements with licensees for such period of time as the Commission may deem necessary or desirable to distribute to such licensees such quantities of special nuclear material as may be necessary for the conduct of the licensed activity. In such agreements, the Commission may agree to repurchase any special nuclear material licensed and distributed by sale which is not consumed in the course of the licensed activity, or any uranium remaining after irradiation of such special nuclear material, at a repurchase price not to exceed the Commission's sale price for comparable special nuclear material or uranium in effect at the time of delivery of such material to the Commission.

(4) The Commission may make a reasonable charge, determined pursuant to this section, for the use of special nuclear material licensed and distributed by lease under subsection (a)(1), (2) or (4) and shall make a reasonable charge determined pursuant to this section for the use of special nuclear material licensed and distributed by lease under subsection (a)(3). The Commission shall establish criteria in writing for the determination of whether special nuclear material will be distributed by grant and for the determination of whether a charge will be made for the use of special nuclear material licensed and distributed by lease under subsection (a)(1), (2) or (4), considering, among other things, whether the licensee is a nonprofit or eleemosynary institution and the purposes for which the special nuclear material will be used.

(d) Determination of charges

In determining the reasonable charge to be made by the Commission for the use of special nuclear material

distributed by lease to licensees of utilization or production facilities licensed pursuant to section 2133 or 2134 of this title, in addition to consideration of the cost thereof, the Commission shall take into consideration—

- (1) the use to be made of the special nuclear material;
- (2) the extent to which the use of the special nuclear material will advance the development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy;
- (3) the energy value of the special nuclear material in the particular use for which the license is issued;
- (4) whether the special nuclear material is to be used in facilities licensed pursuant to section 2133 or 2134 of this title. In this respect, the Commission shall, insofar as practicable, make uniform, nondiscriminatory charges for the use of special nuclear material distributed to facilities licensed pursuant to section 2133 of this title; and
- (5) with respect to special nuclear material consumed in a facility licensed pursuant to section 2133 of this title, the Commission shall make a further charge equivalent to the sale price for similar special nuclear material established by the Commission in accordance with subsection (c)(2), and the Commission may make such a charge with respect to such material consumed in a facility licensed pursuant to section 2134 of this title.

(e) License conditions

Each license issued pursuant to this section shall contain and be subject to the following conditions—

- (1) Repealed. Pub.L. 88-489, § 8, Aug. 26, 1964, 78 Stat. 604
 - (2) no right to the special nuclear material shall be conferred by the license except as defined by the license;
 - (3) neither the license nor any right under the license shall be assigned or otherwise transferred in violation of the provisions of this chapter;
 - (4) all special nuclear material shall be subject to the right of recapture or control reserved by section 2138 of this title and to all other provisions of this chapter;
 - (5) no special nuclear material may be used in any utilization or production facility except in accordance with the provisions of this chapter;
 - (6) special nuclear material shall be distributed only on terms, as may be established by rule of the Commission, such that no user will be permitted to construct an atomic weapon;
 - (7) special nuclear material shall be distributed only pursuant to such safety standards as may be established by rule of the Commission to protect health and to minimize danger to life or property; and
 - (8) except to the extent that the indemnification and limitation of liability provisions of section 2210 of this title apply, the licensee will hold the United States and the Commission harmless from any damages resulting from the use or possession of special nuclear material by the licensee.
- (f) Distribution for independent research and development activities

The Commission is directed to distribute within the United States sufficient special nuclear material to permit the conduct of widespread independent research and development activities to the maximum extent practicable. In the event that applications for special nuclear material exceed the amount available for distribution, preference shall be given to those activities which are most likely, in the opinion of the Commission, to contribute to basic research, to the development of peacetime uses of atomic energy, or to the economic and military strength of the Nation.

42 U.S.C. § 2092

§ 2092. License requirements for transfers

Unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by the Commission, which the Commission is authorized to issue, no person may transfer or receive in interstate commerce, transfer, deliver, receive possession of or title to, or import into or export from the United States any source material after removal from its place of deposit in nature, except that licenses shall not be required for quantities of source material which, in the opinion of the Commission, are unimportant.

42 U.S.C. § 2093

§ 2093. Domestic distribution of source material

(a) License

The Commission is authorized to issue licenses for and to distribute source material within the United States to qualified applicants requesting such material—

- (1) for the conduct of research and development activities of the types specified in section 2051 of this title;
- (2) for use in the conduct of research and development activities or in medical therapy under a license issued pursuant to section 2134 of this title;
- (3) for use under a license issued pursuant to section 2133 of this title; or
- (4) for any other use approved by the Commission as an aid to science or industry.

(b) Minimum criteria for licenses

The Commission shall establish, by rule, minimum criteria for the issuance of specific or general licenses for the distribution of source material depending upon the degree of importance to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public of—

- (1) the physical characteristics of the source material to be distributed;
- (2) the quantities of source material to be distributed; and
- (3) the intended use of the source material to be distributed.

(c) Determination of charges

The Commission may make a reasonable charge determined pursuant to section 2201(m) of this title for the source material licensed and distributed under subsection (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(4) and shall make a reasonable charge determined pursuant to section 2201(m) of this title, for the source material licensed and distributed under subsection (a)(3). The Commission shall establish criteria in writing for the determination of whether a charge will be made for the source material licensed and distributed under subsection (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(4), considering, among other things, whether the licensee is a nonprofit or eleemosynary institution and the purposes for which the source material will be used.

42 U.S.C. § 2111

§ 2111. Domestic distribution

Effective: August 8, 2005

(a) In general

No person may transfer or receive in interstate commerce, manufacture, produce, transfer, acquire, own, possess, import, or export any byproduct material, except to the extent authorized by this section, section 2112 or section 2114 of this title. The Commission is authorized to issue general or specific licenses to applicants seeking to use byproduct material for research or development purposes, for medical therapy, industrial uses, agricultural uses, or such other useful applications as may be developed. The Commission may distribute, sell, loan, or lease such byproduct material as it owns to qualified applicants with or without charge: *Provided, however,* That, for byproduct material to be distributed by the Commission for a charge, the Commission shall establish prices on such equitable basis as, in the opinion of the Commission, (a) will provide reasonable compensation to the Government for such material, (b) will not discourage the use of such material or the development of sources of supply of such material independent of the Commission, and (c) will encourage research and development. In distributing such material, the Commission shall give preference to applicants proposing to use such material either in the conduct of research and development or in medical therapy. The Commission shall not permit the distribution of any byproduct material to any licensee, and shall recall or order the recall of any distributed material from any licensee, who is not equipped to observe or who fails to observe such

safety standards to protect health as may be established by the Commission or who uses such material in violation of law or regulation of the Commission or in a manner other than as disclosed in the application therefor or approved by the Commission. The Commission is authorized to establish classes of byproduct material and to exempt certain classes or quantities of material or kinds of uses or users from the requirements for a license set forth in this section when it makes a finding that the exemption of such classes or quantities of such material or such kinds of uses or users will not constitute an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security and to the health and safety of the public.

(b) Requirements

(1) In general

Except as provided in paragraph (2), byproduct material, as defined in paragraphs (3) and (4) of section 2014(e) of this title, may only be transferred to and disposed of in a disposal facility that—

(A) is adequate to protect public health and safety; and

(B)(i) is licensed by the Commission; or

(ii) is licensed by a State that has entered into an agreement with the Commission under section 2021(b) of this title, if the licensing requirements of the State are compatible with the licensing requirements of the Commission.

(2) Effect of subsection

Nothing in this subsection affects the authority of any entity to dispose of byproduct material, as

defined in paragraphs (3) and (4) of section 2014(e) of this title, at a disposal facility in accordance with any Federal or State solid or hazardous waste law, including the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.).

(c) Treatment as low-level radioactive waste

Byproduct material, as defined in paragraphs (3) and (4) of section 2014(e) of this title, disposed of under this section shall not be considered to be low-level radioactive waste for the purposes of—

(1) section 2 of the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 2021b); or

(2) carrying out a compact that is—

(A) entered into in accordance with that Act (42 U.S.C. 2021b et seq.); and

(B) approved by Congress.

42 U.S.C. § 2133

§ 2133. Commercial licenses

Effective: August 8, 2005

(a) Conditions

The Commission is authorized to issue licenses to persons applying therefor to transfer or receive in interstate commerce, manufacture, produce, transfer, acquire, possess, use, import, or export under the terms of an agreement for cooperation arranged pursuant to section 2153 of this title, utilization or production facilities for industrial or commercial purposes. Such licenses shall be issued in accordance with the provisions of subchapter XV and subject to such conditions as the Commission may by rule or regulation establish to effectuate the purposes and provisions of this chapter.

(b) Nonexclusive basis

The Commission shall issue such licenses on a nonexclusive basis to persons applying therefor (1) whose proposed activities will serve a useful purpose proportionate to the quantities of special nuclear material or source material to be utilized; (2) who are equipped to observe and who agree to observe such safety standards to protect health and to minimize danger to life or property as the Commission may by rule establish; and (3) who agree to make available to the Commission such technical information and data concerning activities under such licenses as the Commission may determine necessary to promote the common defense and security and to protect the health and safety of the public. All such information may be used by the Commission only for the purposes of the common

defense and security and to protect the health and safety of the public.

(c) License period

Each such license shall be issued for a specified period, as determined by the Commission, depending on the type of activity to be licensed, but not exceeding forty years from the authorization to commence operations, and may be renewed upon the expiration of such period.

(d) Limitations

No license under this section may be given to any person for activities which are not under or within the jurisdiction of the United States, except for the export of production or utilization facilities under terms of an agreement for cooperation arranged pursuant to section 2153 of this title, or except under the provisions of section 2139 of this title. No license may be issued to an alien or any any¹ corporation or other entity if the Commission knows or has reason to believe it is owned, controlled, or dominated by an alien, a foreign corporation, or a foreign government. In any event, no license may be issued to any person within the United States if, in the opinion of the Commission, the issuance of a license to such person would be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public.

(f)² Accident notification condition; license revocation; license amendment to include condition

¹ So in original.

² So in original. Probably should be "(e)".

Each license issued for a utilization facility under this section or section 2134(b) of this title shall require as a condition thereof that in case of any accident which could result in an unplanned release of quantities of fission products in excess of allowable limits for normal operation established by the Commission, the licensee shall immediately so notify the Commission. Violation of the condition prescribed by this subsection may, in the Commission's discretion, constitute grounds for license revocation. In accordance with section 2237 of this title, the Commission shall promptly amend each license for a utilization facility issued under this section or section 2134(b) of this title which is in effect on June 30, 1980, to include the provisions required under this subsection.

42 U.S.C. § 2201

§ 2201. General duties of Commission

Effective: December 23, 2022

In the performance of its functions the Commission is authorized to—

(a) Establishment of advisory boards

establish advisory boards to advise with and make recommendations to the Commission on legislation, policies, administration, research, and other matters, provided that the Commission issues regulations setting forth the scope, procedure, and limitations of the authority of each such board;

(b) Standards governing use and possession of material

establish by rule, regulation, or order, such standards and instructions to govern the possession and use of special nuclear material, source material, and byproduct material as the Commission may deem necessary or desirable to promote the common defense and security or to protect health or to minimize danger to life or property; in addition, the Commission shall prescribe such regulations or orders as may be necessary or desirable to promote the Nation's common defense and security with regard to control, ownership, or possession of any equipment or device, or important component part especially designed for such equipment or device, capable of separating the isotopes of uranium or enriching uranium in the isotope 235;

(c) Studies and investigations

make such studies and investigations, obtain such information, and hold such meetings or hearings as the Commission may deem necessary or proper to assist it in exercising any authority provided in this chapter, or in the administration or enforcement of this chapter, or any regulations or orders issued thereunder. For such purposes the Commission is authorized to administer oaths and affirmations, and by subpoena to require any person to appear and testify, or to appear and produce documents, or both, at any designated place. Witnesses subpoenaed under this subsection shall be paid the same fees and mileage as are paid witnesses in the district courts of the United States;

(d) Employment of personnel

appoint and fix the compensation of such officers and employees as may be necessary to carry out the functions of the Commission. Such officers and employees shall be appointed in accordance with the civil-service laws and their compensation fixed in accordance with chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of Title 5, except that, to the extent the Commission deems such action necessary to the discharge of its responsibilities, personnel may be employed and their compensation fixed without regard to such laws: *Provided, however,* That no officer or employee (except such officers and employees whose compensation is fixed by law, and scientific and technical personnel up to a limit of the highest rate of grade 18 of the General Schedule) whose position would be subject to chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of Title 5, if such provisions were

applicable to such position, shall be paid a salary at a rate in excess of the rate payable under such provisions for positions of equivalent difficulty or responsibility. Such rates of compensation may be adopted by the Commission as may be authorized by chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of Title 5, as of the same date such rates are authorized for positions subject to such provisions. The Commission shall make adequate provision for administrative review of any determination to dismiss any employee;

(e) Acquisition of material, property, etc.; negotiation of commercial leases

acquire such material, property, equipment, and facilities, establish or construct such buildings and facilities, and modify such buildings and facilities from time to time, as it may deem necessary, and construct, acquire, provide, or arrange for such facilities and services (at project sites where such facilities and services are not available) for the housing, health, safety, welfare, and recreation of personnel employed by the Commission as it may deem necessary, subject to the provisions of section 2224 of this title: *Provided, however,* That in the communities owned by the Commission, the Commission is authorized to grant privileges, leases and permits upon adjusted terms which (at the time of the initial grant of any privilege grant, lease, or permit, or renewal thereof, or in order to avoid inequities or undue hardship prior to the sale by the United States of property affected by such grant) are fair and reasonable to responsible persons to operate commercial businesses without advertising and without

advertising¹ and without securing competitive bids, but taking into consideration, in addition to the price, and among other things (1) the quality and type of services required by the residents of the community, (2) the experience of each concession applicant in the community and its surrounding area, (3) the ability of the concession applicant to meet the needs of the community, and (4) the contribution the concession applicant has made or will make to the other activities and general welfare of the community;

(f) Utilization of other Federal agencies

with the consent of the agency concerned, utilize or employ the services or personnel of any Government agency or any State or local government, or voluntary or uncompensated personnel, to perform such functions on its behalf as may appear desirable;

(g) Acquisition of real and personal property

acquire, purchase, lease, and hold real and personal property, including patents, as agent of and on behalf of the United States, subject to the provisions of section 2224 of this title, and to sell, lease, grant, and dispose of such real and personal property as provided in this chapter;

(h) Consideration of license applications

consider in a single application one or more of the activities for which a license is required by this chapter, combine in a single license one or more of such activities, and permit the applicant or licensee

¹ So in original.

to incorporate by reference pertinent information already filed with the Commission;

(i) Regulations governing Restricted Data

prescribe such regulations or orders as it may deem necessary (1) to protect Restricted Data received by any person in connection with any activity authorized pursuant to this chapter, (2) to guard against the loss or diversion of any special nuclear material acquired by any person pursuant to section 2073 of this title or produced by any person in connection with any activity authorized pursuant to this chapter, to prevent any use or disposition thereof which the Commission may determine to be inimical to the common defense and security, including regulations or orders designating activities, involving quantities of special nuclear material which in the opinion of the Commission are important to the common defense and security, that may be conducted only by persons whose character, associations, and loyalty shall have been investigated under standards and specifications established by the Commission and as to whom the Commission shall have determined that permitting each such person to conduct the activity will not be inimical to the common defense and security, (3) to govern any activity authorized pursuant to this chapter, including standards and restrictions governing the design, location, and operation of facilities used in the conduct of such activity, in order to protect health and to minimize danger to life or property, and (4) to ensure that sufficient funds will be available for the decommissioning of any production or utilization facility licensed under section 2133 or 2134(b) of this title, including

standards and restrictions governing the control, maintenance, use, and disbursement by any former licensee under this chapter that has control over any fund for the decommissioning of the facility;

(j) Disposition of surplus materials

without regard to the provisions of chapters 1 to 11 (except section 559) of Title 40 and division C (except sections 3302, 3307(e), 3501(b), 3509, 3906, 4710, and 4711) of subtitle I of Title 41, or any other law, make such disposition as it may deem desirable of (1) radioactive materials, and (2) any other property, the special disposition of which is, in the opinion of the Commission, in the interest of the national security: *Provided, however,* That the property furnished to licensees in accordance with the provisions of subsection (m) shall not be deemed to be property disposed of by the Commission pursuant to this subsection;

(k) Carrying of firearms; authority to make arrests without warrant

authorize such of its members, officers, and employees as it deems necessary in the interest of the common defense and security to carry firearms while in the discharge of their official duties. The Commission may also authorize such of those employees of its contractors and subcontractors (at any tier) engaged in the protection of property under the jurisdiction of the United States located at facilities owned by or contracted to the United States or being transported to or from such facilities as it deems necessary in the interests of the common defense and security to carry firearms while in the discharge of their official duties. A person authorized to carry

firearms under this subsection may, while in the performance of, and in connection with, official duties, make arrests without warrant for any offense against the United States committed in that person's presence or for any felony cognizable under the laws of the United States if that person has reasonable ground to believe that the individual to be arrested has committed or is committing such felony. An employee of a contractor or subcontractor authorized to carry firearms under this subsection may make such arrests only when the individual to be arrested is within, or in direct flight from, the area of such offense. A person granted authority to make arrests by this subsection may exercise that authority only in the enforcement of (1) laws regarding the property of the United States in the custody of the Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, or a contractor of the Department of Energy or Nuclear Regulatory Commission, or (2) any provision of this chapter that may subject an offender to a fine, imprisonment, or both. The arrest authority conferred by this subsection is in addition to any arrest authority under other laws. The Secretary, with the approval of the Attorney General, shall issue guidelines to implement this subsection;

(l) Repealed. Pub.L. 87-456, Title III, § 303(c), May 24, 1962, 76 Stat. 78

(m) Agreements regarding production

enter into agreements with persons licensed under section 2133, 2134, 2073(a)(4), or 2093(a)(4) of this title for such periods of time as the Commission may deem necessary or desirable (1) to provide for the processing, fabricating, separating, or refining in

facilities owned by the Commission of source, by-product, or other material or special nuclear material owned by or made available to such licensees and which is utilized or produced in the conduct of the licensed activity, and (2) to sell, lease, or otherwise make available to such licensees such quantities of source or byproduct material, and other material not defined as special nuclear material pursuant to this chapter, as may be necessary for the conduct of the licensed activity: *Provided, however,* That any such agreement may be canceled by the licensee at any time upon payment of such reasonable cancellation charges as may be agreed upon by the licensee and the Commission: *And provided further,* That the Commission shall establish prices to be paid by licensees for material or services to be furnished by the Commission pursuant to this subsection, which prices shall be established on such a non-discriminatory basis as, in the opinion of the Commission, will provide reasonable compensation to the Government for such material or services and will not discourage the development of sources of supply independent of the Commission;

(n) Delegation of functions

delegate to the General Manager or other officers of the Commission any of those functions assigned to it under this chapter except those specified in sections 2071, 2077(b) (with respect to enrichment and reprocessing of special nuclear material or with respect to transfers to any covered foreign country (as defined in section 2077a of this title)), 2091, 2138, 2153, 2165(b) of this title (with respect to the determination of those persons to whom the Commission

may reveal Restricted Data in the national interest), 2165(f) of this title and subsection (a) of this section;

(o) Reports

require by rule, regulation, or order, such reports, and the keeping of such records with respect to, and to provide for such inspections of, activities and studies of types specified in section 2051 of this title and of activities under licenses issued pursuant to sections 2073, 2093, 2111, 2133, and 2134 of this title, as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this chapter, including section 2135 of this title; and

(p) Rules and regulations

make, promulgate, issue, rescind, and amend such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

(q) Easements for rights-of-way

The Commission is authorized and empowered, under such terms and conditions as are deemed advisable by it, to grant easements for rights-of-way over, across, in, and upon acquired lands under its jurisdiction and control, and public lands permanently withdrawn or reserved for the use of the Commission, to any State, political subdivision thereof, or municipality, or to any individual, partnership, or corporation of any State, Territory, or possession of the United States, for (a) railroad tracks; (b) oil pipe lines; (c) substations for electric power transmission lines, telephone lines, and telegraph lines, and pumping stations for gas, water, sewer, and oil pipe lines; (d) canals; (e) ditches; (f) flumes; (g) tunnels; (h) dams and reservoirs in connection with fish and

wildlife programs, fish hatcheries, and other fish-cultural improvements; (i) roads and streets; and (j) for any other purpose or purposes deemed advisable by the Commission: *Provided*, That such rights-of-way shall be granted only upon a finding by the Commission that the same will not be incompatible with the public interest: *Provided further*, That such rights-of-way shall not include any more land than is reasonably necessary for the purpose for which granted: *And provided further*, That all or any part of such rights-of-way may be annulled and forfeited by the Commission for failure to comply with the terms and conditions of any grant hereunder or for nonuse for a period of two consecutive years or abandonment of rights granted under authority hereof. Copies of all instruments granting easements over public lands pursuant to this section shall be furnished to the Secretary of the Interior.

(r) Sale of utilities and related services

Under such regulations and for such periods and at such prices the Commission may prescribe, the Commission may sell or contract to sell to purchasers within Commission-owned communities or in the immediate vicinity of the Commission community, as the case may be, any of the following utilities and related services, if it is determined that they are not available from another local source and that the sale is in the interest of the national defense or in the public interest:

- (1) Electric power.
- (2) Steam.
- (3) Compressed air.

- (4) Water.
- (5) Sewage and garbage disposal.
- (6) Natural, manufactured, or mixed gas.
- (7) Ice.
- (8) Mechanical refrigeration.
- (9) Telephone service.

Proceeds of sales under this subsection shall be credited to the appropriation currently available for the supply of that utility or service. To meet local needs the Commission may make minor expansions and extensions of any distributing system or facility within or in the immediate vicinity of a Commission-owned community through which a utility or service is furnished under this subsection.

(s) Succession of authority

establish a plan for a succession of authority which will assure the continuity of direction of the Commission's operations in the event of a national disaster due to enemy activity. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the person or persons succeeding to command in the event of disaster in accordance with the plan established pursuant to this subsection shall be vested with all of the authority of the Commission: *Provided*, That any such succession to authority, and vesting of authority shall be effective only in the event and as long as a quorum of three or more members of the Commission is unable to convene and exercise direction during the disaster period: *Provided further*, That the disaster period includes the period when attack on the United States is imminent and the post-attack

period necessary to reestablish normal lines of command;

(t) Contracts

enter into contracts for the processing, fabricating, separating, or refining in facilities owned by the Commission of source, byproduct or other material, or special nuclear material, in accordance with and within the period of an agreement for cooperation while comparable services are available to persons licensed under section 2133 or 2134 of this title: *Provided*, That the prices for services under such contracts shall be no less than the prices currently charged by the Commission pursuant to subsection (m);

(u) Additional contracts; guiding principles; appropriations

(1) enter into contracts for such periods of time as the Commission may deem necessary or desirable, but not to exceed five years from the date of execution of the contract, for the purchase or acquisition of reactor services or services related to or required by the operation of reactors;

(2)(A) enter into contracts for such periods of time as the Commission may deem necessary or desirable for the purchase or acquisition of any supplies, equipment, materials, or services required by the Commission whenever the Commission determines that: (i) it is advantageous to the Government to make such purchase or acquisition from commercial sources; (ii) the furnishing of such supplies, equipment, materials, or services will require the construction or acquisition of special facilities by the

vendors or suppliers thereof; (iii) the amortization chargeable to the Commission constitutes an appreciable portion of the cost of contract performance, excluding cost of materials; and (iv) the contract for such period is more advantageous to the Government than a similar contract not executed under the authority of this subsection. Such contracts shall be entered into for periods not to exceed five years each from the date of initial delivery of such supplies, equipment, materials, or services or ten years from the date of execution of the contracts excluding periods of renewal under option.

(B) In entering into such contracts the Commission shall be guided by the following principles: (i) the percentage of the total cost of special facilities devoted to contract performance and chargeable to the Commission should not exceed the ratio between the period of contract deliveries and the anticipated useful life of such special facilities; (ii) the desirability of obtaining options to renew the contract for reasonable periods at prices not to include charges for special facilities already amortized; and (iii) the desirability of reserving in the Commission the right to take title to the special facilities under appropriate circumstances; and

(3) include in contracts made under this subsection provisions which limit the obligation of funds to estimated annual deliveries and services and the unamortized balance of such amounts due for special facilities as the parties shall agree is chargeable to the performance of the contract. Any appropriation available at the time of termination or thereafter made available to the Commission for operating

expenses shall be available for payment of such costs which may arise from termination as the contract may provide. The term "special facilities" as used in this subsection means any land and any depreciable buildings, structures, utilities, machinery, equipment, and fixtures necessary for the production or furnishing of such supplies, equipment, materials, or services and not available to the vendors or suppliers for the performance of the contract.

(v) Support of United States Enrichment Corporation

provide services in support of the United States Enrichment Corporation, except that the Secretary of Energy shall annually collect payments and other charges from the Corporation sufficient to ensure recovery of the costs (excluding depreciation and imputed interest on original plant investments in the Department's gaseous diffusion plants and costs under section 2297c-2(d) of this title) incurred by the Department of Energy after October 24, 1992, in performing such services;

(w) License fees for nuclear power reactors

prescribe and collect from any other Government agency, which applies to the Commission for, or is issued by the Commission, a license or certificate, any fee, charge, or price which it may require, in accordance with the provisions of section 9701 of Title 31 or any other law.

(x) Standards and instructions for bonding, surety, or other financial arrangements, including performance bonds

Establish by rule, regulation, or order, after public notice, and in accordance with the requirements of section 2231 of this title, such standards and instructions as the Commission may deem necessary or desirable to ensure—

(1) that an adequate bond, surety, or other financial arrangement (as determined by the Commission) will be provided, before termination of any license for byproduct material as defined in section 2014(e)(2) of this title, by a licensee to permit the completion of all requirements established by the Commission for the decontamination, decommissioning, and reclamation of sites, structures, and equipment used in conjunction with byproduct material as so defined, and

(2) that—

(A) in the case of any such license issued or renewed after November 8, 1978, the need for long-term maintenance and monitoring of such sites, structures and equipment after termination of such license will be minimized and, to the maximum extent practicable, eliminated; and

(B) in the case of each license for such material (whether in effect on November 8, 1978, or issued or renewed thereafter), if the Commission determines that any such long-term maintenance and monitoring is necessary, the licensee, before termination of any license for byproduct material as defined in section 2014(e)(2) of this title, will make available such bonding, surety, or other financial arrangements as may be necessary to assure such long-term maintenance and monitoring.

Such standards and instructions promulgated by the Commission pursuant to this subsection shall take into account, as determined by the Commission, so as to avoid unnecessary duplication and expense, performance bonds or other financial arrangements which are required by other Federal agencies or State agencies and/or other local governing bodies for such decommissioning, decontamination, and reclamation and long-term maintenance and monitoring except that nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to require that the Commission accept such bonds or arrangements if the Commission determines that such bonds or arrangements are not adequate to carry out subparagraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection.

42 U.S.C. § 2239

§ 2239. Hearings and judicial review

Effective: April 26, 1996

(a)(1)(A) In any proceeding under this chapter, for the granting, suspending, revoking, or amending of any license or construction permit, or application to transfer control, and in any proceeding for the issuance or modification of rules and regulations dealing with the activities of licensees, and in any proceeding for the payment of compensation, an award or royalties under sections¹ 2183, 2187, 2236(c) or 2238 of this title, the Commission shall grant a hearing upon the request of any person whose interest may be affected by the proceeding, and shall admit any such person as a party to such proceeding. The Commission shall hold a hearing after thirty days' notice and publication once in the Federal Register, on each application under section 2133 or 2134(b) of this title for a construction permit for a facility, and on any application under section 2134(c) of this title for a construction permit for a testing facility. In cases where such a construction permit has been issued following the holding of such a hearing, the Commission may, in the absence of a request therefor by any person whose interest may be affected, issue an operating license or an amendment to a construction permit or an amendment to an operating license without a hearing, but upon thirty days' notice and publication once in the Federal Register of its intent to do so. The Commission may dispense with such thirty days' notice and publication with respect to any application for an

¹ So in original. Probably should be "section".

amendment to a construction permit or an amendment to an operating license upon a determination by the Commission that the amendment involves no significant hazards consideration.

(B)(i) Not less than 180 days before the date scheduled for initial loading of fuel into a plant by a licensee that has been issued a combined construction permit and operating license under section 2235(b) of this title, the Commission shall publish in the Federal Register notice of intended operation. That notice shall provide that any person whose interest may be affected by operation of the plant, may within 60 days request the Commission to hold a hearing on whether the facility as constructed complies, or on completion will comply, with the acceptance criteria of the license.

(ii) A request for hearing under clause (i) shall show, prima facie, that one or more of the acceptance criteria in the combined license have not been, or will not be met, and the specific operational consequences of non-conformance that would be contrary to providing reasonable assurance of adequate protection of the public health and safety.

(iii) After receiving a request for a hearing under clause (i), the Commission expeditiously shall either deny or grant the request. If the request is granted, the Commission shall determine, after considering petitioners' prima facie showing and any answers thereto, whether during a period of interim operation, there will be reasonable assurance of adequate protection of the public health and safety. If the Commission determines that there is such reasonable assurance, it shall allow operation during an interim period under the combined license.

(iv) The Commission, in its discretion, shall determine appropriate hearing procedures, whether informal or formal adjudicatory, for any hearing under clause (i), and shall state its reasons therefor.

(v) The Commission shall, to the maximum possible extent, render a decision on issues raised by the hearing request within 180 days of the publication of the notice provided by clause (i) or the anticipated date for initial loading of fuel into the reactor, whichever is later. Commencement of operation under a combined license is not subject to subparagraph (A).

(2)(A) The Commission may issue and make immediately effective any amendment to an operating license or any amendment to a combined construction and operating license, upon a determination by the Commission that such amendment involves no significant hazards consideration, notwithstanding the pendency before the Commission of a request for a hearing from any person. Such amendment may be issued and made immediately effective in advance of the holding and completion of any required hearing. In determining under this section whether such amendment involves no significant hazards consideration, the Commission shall consult with the State in which the facility involved is located. In all other respects such amendment shall meet the requirements of this chapter.

(B) The Commission shall periodically (but not less frequently than once every thirty days) publish notice of any amendments issued, or proposed to be issued, as provided in subparagraph (A). Each such notice shall include all amendments issued, or proposed to be issued, since the date of publication of the last such

periodic notice. Such notice shall, with respect to each amendment or proposed amendment (i) identify the facility involved; and (ii) provide a brief description of such amendment. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to delay the effective date of any amendment.

(C) The Commission shall, during the ninety-day period following the effective date of this paragraph, promulgate regulations establishing (i) standards for determining whether any amendment to an operating license or any amendment to a combined construction and operating license involves no significant hazards consideration; (ii) criteria for providing or, in emergency situations, dispensing with prior notice and reasonable opportunity for public comment on any such determination, which criteria shall take into account the exigency of the need for the amendment involved; and (iii) procedures for consultation on any such determination with the State in which the facility involved is located.

(b) The following Commission actions shall be subject to judicial review in the manner prescribed in chapter 158 of Title 28 and chapter 7 of Title 5:

- (1)** Any final order entered in any proceeding of the kind specified in subsection (a).
- (2)** Any final order allowing or prohibiting a facility to begin operating under a combined construction and operating license.
- (3)** Any final order establishing by regulation standards to govern the Department of Energy's gaseous diffusion uranium enrichment plants, including any

such facilities leased to a corporation established under the USEC Privatization Act.

(4) Any final determination under section 2297f(c) of this title relating to whether the gaseous diffusion plants, including any such facilities leased to a corporation established under the USEC Privatization Act, are in compliance with the Commission's standards governing the gaseous diffusion plants and all applicable laws.

42 U.S.C. § 10101

§ 10101. Definitions

For purposes of this chapter:

(1) The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

(2) The term “affected Indian tribe” means any Indian tribe—

(A) within whose reservation boundaries a monitored retrievable storage facility, test and evaluation facility, or a repository for high-level radioactive waste or spent fuel is proposed to be located;

(B) whose federally defined possessory or usage rights to other lands outside of the reservation’s boundaries arising out of congressionally ratified treaties may be substantially and adversely affected by the locating of such a facility: *Provided*, That the Secretary of the Interior finds, upon the petition of the appropriate governmental officials of the tribe, that such effects are both substantial and adverse to the tribe;¹

(3) The term “atomic energy defense activity” means any activity of the Secretary performed in whole or in part in carrying out any of the following functions:

(A) naval reactors development;

(B) weapons activities including defense inertial confinement fusion;

(C) verification and control technology;

¹ So in original. The semicolon probably should be a period.

- (D)** defense nuclear materials production;
- (E)** defense nuclear waste and materials by-products management;
- (F)** defense nuclear materials security and safeguards and security investigations; and
- (G)** defense research and development.

(4) The term “candidate site” means an area, within a geologic and hydrologic system, that is recommended by the Secretary under section 10132 of this title for site characterization, approved by the President under section 10132 of this title for site characterization, or undergoing site characterization under section 10133 of this title.

(5) The term “civilian nuclear activity” means any atomic energy activity other than an atomic energy defense activity.

(6) The term “civilian nuclear power reactor” means a civilian nuclear powerplant required to be licensed under section 2133 or 2134(b) of this title.

(7) The term “Commission” means the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

(8) The term “Department” means the Department of Energy.

(9) The term “disposal” means the emplacement in a repository of high-level radioactive waste, spent nuclear fuel, or other highly radioactive material with no foreseeable intent of recovery, whether or not such emplacement permits the recovery of such waste.

(10) The terms “disposal package” and “package” mean the primary container that holds, and is in contact with, solidified high-level radioactive waste, spent nuclear fuel, or other radioactive materials, and any overpacks that are emplaced at a repository.

(11) The term “engineered barriers” means manmade components of a disposal system designed to prevent the release of radionuclides into the geologic medium involved. Such term includes the high-level radioactive waste form, high-level radioactive waste canisters, and other materials placed over and around such canisters.

(12) The term “high-level radioactive waste” means—

(A) the highly radioactive material resulting from the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, including liquid waste produced directly in reprocessing and any solid material derived from such liquid waste that contains fission products in sufficient concentrations; and

(B) other highly radioactive material that the Commission, consistent with existing law, determines by rule requires permanent isolation.

(13) The term “Federal agency” means any Executive agency, as defined in section 105 of Title 5.

(14) The term “Governor” means the chief executive officer of a State.

(15) The term “Indian tribe” means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community of Indians recognized as eligible for the

services provided to Indians by the Secretary of the Interior because of their status as Indians, including any Alaska Native village, as defined in section 3(c) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602(c)).

(16) The term “low-level radioactive waste” means radioactive material that—

(A) is not high-level radioactive waste, spent nuclear fuel, transuranic waste, or by-product material as defined in section 2014(e)(2) of this title; and

(B) the Commission, consistent with existing law, classifies as low-level radioactive waste.

(17) The term “Office” means the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management established in section 10224 of this title.

(18) The term “repository” means any system licensed by the Commission that is intended to be used for, or may be used for, the permanent deep geologic disposal of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, whether or not such system is designed to permit the recovery, for a limited period during initial operation, of any materials placed in such system. Such term includes both surface and subsurface areas at which high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel handling activities are conducted.

(19) The term “reservation” means—

(A) any Indian reservation or dependent Indian community referred to in clause (a) or (b) of section 1151 of Title 18; or

(B) any land selected by an Alaska Native village or regional corporation under the provisions of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).

(20) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Energy.

(21) The term “site characterization” means—

(A) siting research activities with respect to a test and evaluation facility at a candidate site; and

(B) activities, whether in the laboratory or in the field, undertaken to establish the geologic condition and the ranges of the parameters of a candidate site relevant to the location of a repository, including borings, surface excavations, excavations of exploratory shafts, limited subsurface lateral excavations and borings, and in situ testing needed to evaluate the suitability of a candidate site for the location of a repository, but not including preliminary borings and geophysical testing needed to assess whether site characterization should be undertaken.

(22) The term “siting research” means activities, including borings, surface excavations, shaft excavations, subsurface lateral excavations and borings, and in situ testing, to determine the suitability of a site for a test and evaluation facility.

(23) The term “spent nuclear fuel” means fuel that has been withdrawn from a nuclear reactor following irradiation, the constituent elements of which have not been separated by reprocessing.

(24) The term “State” means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and any other territory or possession of the United States.

(25) The term “storage” means retention of high-level radioactive waste, spent nuclear fuel, or transuranic waste with the intent to recover such waste or fuel for subsequent use, processing, or disposal.

(26) The term “Storage Fund” means the Interim Storage Fund established in section 10156(c) of this title.

(27) The term “test and evaluation facility” means an at-depth, prototypic, underground cavity with subsurface lateral excavations extending from a central shaft that is used for research and development purposes, including the development of data and experience for the safe handling and disposal of solidified high-level radioactive waste, transuranic waste, or spent nuclear fuel.

(28) The term “unit of general local government” means any borough, city, county, parish, town, township, village, or other general purpose political subdivision of a State.

(29) The term “Waste Fund” means the Nuclear Waste Fund established in section 10222(c) of this title.

(30) The term “Yucca Mountain site” means the candidate site in the State of Nevada recommended by the Secretary to the President under section 10132(b)(1)(B) of this title on May 27, 1986.

(31) The term “affected unit of local government” means the unit of local government with jurisdiction over the site of a repository or a monitored retrievable storage facility. Such term may, at the discretion of the Secretary, include units of local government that are contiguous with such unit.

(32) The term “Negotiator” means the Nuclear Waste Negotiator.

(33) As used in subchapter IV, the term “Office” means the Office of the Nuclear Waste Negotiator established under subchapter IV of this chapter.

(34) The term “monitored retrievable storage facility” means the storage facility described in section 10161(b)(1) of this title.

42 U.S.C. § 10107

§ 10107. Applicability to atomic energy defense activities

(a) Atomic energy defense activities

Subject to the provisions of subsection (c), the provisions of this chapter shall not apply with respect to any atomic energy defense activity or to any facility used in connection with any such activity.

(b) Evaluation by President

(1) Not later than 2 years after January 7, 1983, the President shall evaluate the use of disposal capacity at one or more repositories to be developed under part A of subchapter I for the disposal of high-level radioactive waste resulting from atomic energy defense activities. Such evaluation shall take into consideration factors relating to cost efficiency, health and safety, regulation, transportation, public acceptability, and national security.

(2) Unless the President finds, after conducting the evaluation required in paragraph (1), that the development of a repository for the disposal of high-level radioactive waste resulting from atomic energy defense activities only is required, taking into account all of the factors described in such subsection, the Secretary shall proceed promptly with arrangement for the use of one or more of the repositories to be developed under part A of subchapter I for the disposal of such waste. Such arrangements shall include the allocation of costs of developing, constructing, and operating this repository or repositories. The costs resulting from permanent disposal of high-level radioactive waste from atomic energy defense activities shall be

paid by the Federal Government, into the special account established under section 10222 of this title.

(3) Any repository for the disposal of high-level radioactive waste resulting from atomic energy defense activities only shall (A) be subject to licensing under section 5842 of this title; and (B) comply with all requirements of the Commission for the siting, development, construction, and operation of a repository.

(c) Applicability to certain repositories

The provisions of this chapter shall apply with respect to any repository not used exclusively for the disposal of high-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel resulting from atomic energy defense activities, research and development activities of the Secretary, or both.

42 U.S.C. § 10108

§ 10108. Applicability to transportation

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to affect Federal, State, or local laws pertaining to the transportation of spent nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste.

42 U.S.C. § 10131

§ 10131. Findings and purposes

(a) The Congress finds that—

- (1)** radioactive waste creates potential risks and requires safe and environmentally acceptable methods of disposal;
- (2)** a national problem has been created by the accumulation of (A) spent nuclear fuel from nuclear reactors; and (B) radioactive waste from (i) reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel; (ii) activities related to medical research, diagnosis, and treatment; and (iii) other sources;
- (3)** Federal efforts during the past 30 years to devise a permanent solution to the problems of civilian radioactive waste disposal have not been adequate;
- (4)** while the Federal Government has the responsibility to provide for the permanent disposal of high-level radioactive waste and such spent nuclear fuel as may be disposed of in order to protect the public health and safety and the environment, the costs of such disposal should be the responsibility of the generators and owners of such waste and spent fuel;
- (5)** the generators and owners of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel have the primary responsibility to provide for, and the responsibility to pay the costs of, the interim storage of such waste and spent fuel until such waste and spent fuel is accepted by the Secretary of Energy in accordance with the provisions of this chapter;
- (6)** State and public participation in the planning and development of repositories is essential in order

to promote public confidence in the safety of disposal of such waste and spent fuel; and

(7) high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel have become major subjects of public concern, and appropriate precautions must be taken to ensure that such waste and spent fuel do not adversely affect the public health and safety and the environment for this or future generations.

(b) The purposes of this part are—

(1) to establish a schedule for the siting, construction, and operation of repositories that will provide a reasonable assurance that the public and the environment will be adequately protected from the hazards posed by high-level radioactive waste and such spent nuclear fuel as may be disposed of in a repository;

(2) to establish the Federal responsibility, and a definite Federal policy, for the disposal of such waste and spent fuel;

(3) to define the relationship between the Federal Government and the State governments with respect to the disposal of such waste and spent fuel; and

(4) to establish a Nuclear Waste Fund, composed of payments made by the generators and owners of such waste and spent fuel, that will ensure that the costs of carrying out activities relating to the disposal of such waste and spent fuel will be borne by the persons responsible for generating such waste and spent fuel.

42 U.S.C. § 10133

§ 10133. Site characterization

(a) In general

The Secretary shall carry out, in accordance with the provisions of this section, appropriate site characterization activities at the Yucca Mountain site. The Secretary shall consider fully the comments received under subsection (b)(2) and section 10132(b)(2) of this title and shall, to the maximum extent practicable and in consultation with the Governor of the State of Nevada, conduct site characterization activities in a manner that minimizes any significant adverse environmental impacts identified in such comments or in the environmental assessment submitted under subsection (b)(1).

(b) Commission and States

(1) Before proceeding to sink shafts at the Yucca Mountain site, the Secretary shall submit for such candidate site to the Commission and to the Governor or legislature of the State of Nevada, for their review and comment—

(A) a general plan for site characterization activities to be conducted at such candidate site, which plan shall include—

(i) a description of such candidate site;

(ii) a description of such site characterization activities, including the following: the extent of planned excavations, plans for any onsite testing with radioactive or nonradioactive material, plans for any investigation activities that may affect the capability of such candidate site to isolate high-

level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, and plans to control any adverse, safety-related impacts from such site characterization activities;

(iii) plans for the decontamination and decommissioning of such candidate site, and for the mitigation of any significant adverse environmental impacts caused by site characterization activities if it is determined unsuitable for application for a construction authorization for a repository;

(iv) criteria to be used to determine the suitability of such candidate site for the location of a repository, developed pursuant to section 10132(a) of this title; and

(v) any other information required by the Commission;

(B) a description of the possible form or packaging for the high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel to be emplaced in such repository, a description, to the extent practicable, of the relationship between such waste form or packaging and the geologic medium of such site, and a description of the activities being conducted by the Secretary with respect to such possible waste form or packaging or such relationship; and

(C) a conceptual repository design that takes into account likely site-specific requirements.

(2) Before proceeding to sink shafts at the Yucca Mountain site, the Secretary shall (A) make available to the public the site characterization plan described in paragraph (1); and (B) hold public hearings in the vicinity of such candidate site to inform the residents

of the area in which such candidate site is located of such plan, and to receive their comments.

(3) During the conduct of site characterization activities at the Yucca Mountain site, the Secretary shall report not less than once every 6 months to the Commission and to the Governor and legislature of the State of Nevada, on the nature and extent of such activities and the information developed from such activities.

(c) Restrictions

(1) The Secretary may conduct at the Yucca Mountain site only such site characterization activities as the Secretary considers necessary to provide the data required for evaluation of the suitability of such site for an application to be submitted to the Commission for a construction authorization for a repository at such site, and for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

(2) In conducting site characterization activities—

(A) the Secretary may not use any radioactive material at a site unless the Commission concurs that such use is necessary to provide data for the preparation of the required environmental reports and an application for a construction authorization for a repository at such site; and

(B) if any radioactive material is used at a site—

(i) the Secretary shall use the minimum quantity necessary to determine the suitability of such site for a repository, but in no event more than the curie equivalent of 10 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel; and

(ii) such radioactive material shall be fully retrievable.

(3) If the Secretary at any time determines the Yucca Mountain site to be unsuitable for development as a repository, the Secretary shall—

(A) terminate all site characterization activities at such site;

(B) notify the Congress, the¹ Governor and legislature of Nevada of such termination and the reasons for such termination;

(C) remove any high-level radioactive waste, spent nuclear fuel, or other radioactive materials at or in such site as promptly as practicable;

(D) take reasonable and necessary steps to reclaim the site and to mitigate any significant adverse environmental impacts caused by site characterization activities at such site;

(E) suspend all future benefits payments under part F with respect to such site; and

(F) report to Congress not later than 6 months after such determination the Secretary's recommendations for further action to assure the safe, permanent disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste, including the need for new legislative authority.

(d) Preliminary activities

Each activity of the Secretary under this section that is in compliance with the provisions of subsection (c)

¹ So in original. Probably should read "Congress and the"

shall be considered a preliminary decisionmaking activity. No such activity shall require the preparation of an environmental impact statement under section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)), or to² require any environmental review under subparagraph (E) or (F) of section 102(2) of such Act.

² So in original. The word “to” probably should not appear.

42 U.S.C. § 10134

§ 10134. Site approval and construction authorization

(a) Hearings and Presidential recommendation

(1) The Secretary shall hold public hearings in the vicinity of the Yucca Mountain site, for the purposes of informing the residents of the area of such consideration and receiving their comments regarding the possible recommendation of such site. If, upon completion of such hearings and completion of site characterization activities at the Yucca Mountain site, under section 10133 of this title, the Secretary decides to recommend approval of such site to the President, the Secretary shall notify the Governor and legislature of the State of Nevada, of such decision. No sooner than the expiration of the 30-day period following such notification, the Secretary shall submit to the President a recommendation that the President approve such site for the development of a repository. Any such recommendation by the Secretary shall be based on the record of information developed by the Secretary under section 10133 of this title and this section, including the information described in subparagraph (A) through subparagraph (G). Together with any recommendation of a site under this paragraph, the Secretary shall make available to the public, and submit to the President, a comprehensive statement of the basis of such recommendation, including the following:

(A) a description of the proposed repository, including preliminary engineering specifications for the facility;

(B) a description of the waste form or packaging proposed for use at such repository, and an explanation of the relationship between such waste form or packaging and the geologic medium of such site;

(C) a discussion of data, obtained in site characterization activities, relating to the safety of such site;

(D) a final environmental impact statement prepared for the Yucca Mountain site pursuant to subsection (f) and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), together with comments made concerning such environmental impact statement by the Secretary of the Interior, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Administrator, and the Commission, except that the Secretary shall not be required in any such environmental impact statement to consider the need for a repository, the alternatives to geological disposal, or alternative sites to the Yucca Mountain site;

(E) preliminary comments of the Commission concerning the extent to which the at-depth site characterization analysis and the waste form proposal for such site seem to be sufficient for inclusion in any application to be submitted by the Secretary for licensing of such site as a repository;

(F) the views and comments of the Governor and legislature of any State, or the governing body of any affected Indian tribe, as determined by the Secretary, together with the response of the Secretary to such views;

(G) such other information as the Secretary considers appropriate; and

(H) any impact report submitted under section 10136(c)(2)(B) of this title by the State of Nevada.

(2)(A) If, after recommendation by the Secretary, the President considers the Yucca Mountain site qualified for application for a construction authorization for a repository, the President shall submit a recommendation of such site to Congress.

(B) The President shall submit with such recommendation a copy of the statement for such site prepared by the Secretary under paragraph (1).

(3)(A) The President may not recommend the approval of the Yucca Mountain site unless the Secretary has recommended to the President under paragraph (1) approval of such site and has submitted to the President a statement for such site as required under such paragraph.

(B) No recommendation of a site by the President under this subsection shall require the preparation of an environmental impact statement under section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)), or to¹ require any environmental review under subparagraph (E) or (F) of section 102(2) of such Act.

(b) Submission of application

If the President recommends to the Congress the Yucca Mountain site under subsection (a) and the site designation is permitted to take effect under section 10135 of this title, the Secretary shall submit to the Commission an application for a construction authorization for a repository at such site not later than 90

¹ So in original. The word “to” probably should not appear.

days after the date on which the recommendation of the site designation is effective under such section and shall provide to the Governor and legislature of the State of Nevada a copy of such application.

(c) Status report on application

Not later than 1 year after the date on which an application for a construction authorization is submitted under subsection (b), and annually thereafter until the date on which such authorization is granted, the Commission shall submit a report to the Congress describing the proceedings undertaken through the date of such report with regard to such application, including a description of—

- (1) any major unresolved safety issues, and the explanation of the Secretary with respect to design and operation plans for resolving such issues;
- (2) any matters of contention regarding such application; and
- (3) any Commission actions regarding the granting or denial of such authorization.

(d) Commission action

The Commission shall consider an application for a construction authorization for all or part of a repository in accordance with the laws applicable to such applications, except that the Commission shall issue a final decision approving or disapproving the issuance of a construction authorization not later than the expiration of 3 years after the date of the submission of such application, except that the Commission may extend such deadline by not more than 12 months if, not less than 30 days before such deadline, the

Commission complies with the reporting requirements established in subsection (e)(2). The Commission decision approving the first such application shall prohibit the emplacement in the first repository of a quantity of spent fuel containing in excess of 70,000 metric tons of heavy metal or a quantity of solidified high-level radioactive waste resulting from the reprocessing of such a quantity of spent fuel until such time as a second repository is in operation. In the event that a monitored retrievable storage facility, approved pursuant to part C of this subchapter, shall be located, or is planned to be located, within 50 miles of the first repository, then the Commission decision approving the first such application shall prohibit the emplacement of a quantity of spent fuel containing in excess of 70,000 metric tons of heavy metal or a quantity of solidified high-level radioactive waste resulting from the reprocessing of spent fuel in both the repository and monitored retrievable storage facility until such time as a second repository is in operation.

(e) Project decision schedule

(1) The Secretary shall prepare and update, as appropriate, in cooperation with all affected Federal agencies, a project decision schedule that portrays the optimum way to attain the operation of the repository, within the time periods specified in this part. Such schedule shall include a description of objectives and a sequence of deadlines for all Federal agencies required to take action, including an identification of the activities in which a delay in the start, or completion, of such activities will cause a delay in beginning repository operation.

(2) Any Federal agency that determines that it cannot comply with any deadline in the project decision schedule, or fails to so comply, shall submit to the Secretary and to the Congress a written report explaining the reason for its failure or expected failure to meet such deadline, the reason why such agency could not reach an agreement with the Secretary, the estimated time for completion of the activity or activities involved, the associated effect on its other deadlines in the project decision schedule, and any recommendations it may have or actions it intends to take regarding any improvements in its operation or organization, or changes to its statutory directives or authority, so that it will be able to mitigate the delay involved. The Secretary, within 30 days after receiving any such report, shall file with the Congress his response to such report, including the reasons why the Secretary could not amend the project decision schedule to accommodate the Federal agency involved.

(f) Environmental impact statement

(1) Any recommendation made by the Secretary under this section shall be considered a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment for purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). A final environmental impact statement prepared by the Secretary under such Act shall accompany any recommendation to the President to approve a site for a repository.

(2) With respect to the requirements imposed by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), compliance with the procedures and requirements of this chapter shall be deemed adequate

consideration of the need for a repository, the time of the initial availability of a repository, and all alternatives to the isolation of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel in a repository.

(3) For purposes of complying with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and this section, the Secretary need not consider alternate sites to the Yucca Mountain site for the repository to be developed under this part.

(4) Any environmental impact statement prepared in connection with a repository proposed to be constructed by the Secretary under this part shall, to the extent practicable, be adopted by the Commission in connection with the issuance by the Commission of a construction authorization and license for such repository. To the extent such statement is adopted by the Commission, such adoption shall be deemed to also satisfy the responsibilities of the Commission under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and no further consideration shall be required, except that nothing in this subsection shall affect any independent responsibilities of the Commission to protect the public health and safety under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.).

(5) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to amend or otherwise detract from the licensing requirements of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission established in title II of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5841 et seq.).

(6) In any such statement prepared with respect to the repository to be constructed under this part, the

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Nuclear Regulatory Commission need not consider the need for a repository, the time of initial availability of a repository, alternate sites to the Yucca Mountain site, or nongeologic alternatives to such site.

42 U.S.C. § 10137

§ 10137. Consultation with States and affected Indian tribes

(a) Provision of information

(1) The Secretary, the Commission, and other agencies involved in the construction, operation, or regulation of any aspect of a repository in a State shall provide to the Governor and legislature of such State, and to the governing body of any affected Indian tribe, timely and complete information regarding determinations or plans made with respect to the site characterization siting, development, design, licensing, construction, operation, regulation, or decommissioning of such repository.

(2) Upon written request for such information by the Governor or legislature of such State, or by the governing body of any affected Indian tribe, as the case may be, the Secretary shall provide a written response to such request within 30 days of the receipt of such request. Such response shall provide the information requested or, in the alternative, the reasons why the information cannot be so provided. If the Secretary fails to so respond within such 30 days, the Governor or legislature of such State, or the governing body of any affected Indian tribe, as the case may be, may transmit a formal written objection to such failure to respond to the President. If the President or Secretary fails to respond to such written request within 30 days of the receipt by the President of such formal written objection, the Secretary shall immediately suspend all activities in such State authorized by this part, and shall not renew such activities until the Governor or legislature of such State, or the governing body of any

affected Indian tribe, as the case may be, has received the written response to such written request required by this subsection.

(b) Consultation and cooperation

In performing any study of an area within a State for the purpose of determining the suitability of such area for a repository pursuant to section 10132(c) of this title, and in subsequently developing and loading¹ any repository within such State, the Secretary shall consult and cooperate with the Governor and legislature of such State and the governing body of any affected Indian tribe in an effort to resolve the concerns of such State and any affected Indian tribe regarding the public health and safety, environmental, and economic impacts of any such repository. In carrying out his duties under this part, the Secretary shall take such concerns into account to the maximum extent feasible and as specified in written agreements entered into under subsection (c).

(c) Written agreement

Not later than 60 days after (1) the approval of a site for site characterization for such a repository under section 10132(c) of this title, or (2) the written request of the State or Indian tribe in any affected State notified under section 10136(a) of this title to the Secretary, whichever,² first occurs, the Secretary shall seek to enter into a binding written agreement, and shall begin negotiations, with such State and, where appropriate, to enter into a separate binding agreement

¹ So in original. Probably should be “locating”.

² So in original. The comma probably should not appear.

with the governing body of any affected Indian tribe, setting forth (but not limited to) the procedures under which the requirements of subsections (a) and (b), and the provisions of such written agreement, shall be carried out. Any such written agreement shall not affect the authority of the Commission under existing law. Each such written agreement shall, to the maximum extent feasible, be completed not later than 6 months after such notification. Such written agreement shall specify procedures—

- (1)** by which such State or governing body of an affected Indian tribe, as the case may be, may study, determine, comment on, and make recommendations with regard to the possible public health and safety, environmental, social, and economic impacts of any such repository;
- (2)** by which the Secretary shall consider and respond to comments and recommendations made by such State or governing body of an affected Indian tribe, including the period in which the Secretary shall so respond;
- (3)** by which the Secretary and such State or governing body of an affected Indian tribe may review or modify the agreement periodically;
- (4)** by which such State or governing body of an affected Indian tribe is to submit an impact report and request for impact assistance under section 10136(c) of this title or section 10138(b) of this title, as the case may be;
- (5)** by which the Secretary shall assist such State, and the units of general local government in the vicinity of the repository site, in resolving the offsite

concerns of such State and units of general local government, including, but not limited to, questions of State liability arising from accidents, necessary road upgrading and access to the site, ongoing emergency preparedness and emergency response, monitoring of transportation of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel through such State, conduct of baseline health studies of inhabitants in neighboring communities near the repository site and reasonable periodic monitoring thereafter, and monitoring of the repository site upon any decommissioning and decontamination;

(6) by which the Secretary shall consult and cooperate with such State on a regular, ongoing basis and provide for an orderly process and timely schedule for State review and evaluation, including identification in the agreement of key events, milestones, and decision points in the activities of the Secretary at the potential repository site;

(7) by which the Secretary shall notify such State prior to the transportation of any high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel into such State for disposal at the repository site;

(8) by which such State may conduct reasonable independent monitoring and testing of activities on the repository site, except that such monitoring and testing shall not unreasonably interfere with or delay onsite activities;

(9) for sharing, in accordance with applicable law, of all technical and licensing information, the utilization of available expertise, the facilitating of permit procedures, joint project review, and the formulation of joint surveillance and monitoring

arrangements to carry out applicable Federal and State laws;

(10) for public notification of the procedures specified under the preceding paragraphs; and

(11) for resolving objections of a State and affected Indian tribes at any stage of the planning, siting, development, construction, operation, or closure of such a facility within such State through negotiation, arbitration, or other appropriate mechanisms.

(d) On-site representative

The Secretary shall offer to any State, Indian tribe or unit of local government within whose jurisdiction a site for a repository or monitored retrievable storage facility is located under this subchapter an opportunity to designate a representative to conduct on-site oversight activities at such site. Reasonable expenses of such representatives shall be paid out of the Waste Fund.

42 U.S.C. § 10142

§ 10142. Disposal of spent nuclear fuel

Notwithstanding any other provision of this part, any repository constructed on a site approved under this part shall be designed and constructed to permit the retrieval of any spent nuclear fuel placed in such repository, during an appropriate period of operation of the facility, for any reason pertaining to the public health and safety, or the environment, or for the purpose of permitting the recovery of the economically valuable contents of such spent fuel. The Secretary shall specify the appropriate period of retrievability with respect to any repository at the time of design of such repository, and such aspect of such repository shall be subject to approval or disapproval by the Commission as part of the construction authorization process under subsections (b) through (d) of section 10134 of this title.

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42 U.S.C. § 10143

§ 10143. Title to material

Delivery, and acceptance by the Secretary, of any high-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel for a repository constructed under this part shall constitute a transfer to the Secretary of title to such waste or spent fuel.

42 U.S.C. § 10151

§ 10151. Findings and purposes

(a) The Congress finds that—

(1) the persons owning and operating civilian nuclear power reactors have the primary responsibility for providing interim storage of spent nuclear fuel from such reactors, by maximizing, to the extent practical, the effective use of existing storage facilities at the site of each civilian nuclear power reactor, and by adding new onsite storage capacity in a timely manner where practical;

(2) the Federal Government has the responsibility to encourage and expedite the effective use of existing storage facilities and the addition of needed new storage capacity at the site of each civilian nuclear power reactor; and

(3) the Federal Government has the responsibility to provide, in accordance with the provisions of this part, not more than 1,900 metric tons of capacity for interim storage of spent nuclear fuel for civilian nuclear power reactors that cannot reasonably provide adequate storage capacity at the sites of such reactors when needed to assure the continued, orderly operation of such reactors.

(b) The purposes of this part are—

(1) to provide for the utilization of available spent nuclear fuel pools at the site of each civilian nuclear power reactor to the extent practical and the addition of new spent nuclear fuel storage capacity where practical at the site of such reactor; and

(2) to provide, in accordance with the provisions of this part, for the establishment of a federally owned and operated system for the interim storage of spent nuclear fuel at one or more facilities owned by the Federal Government with not more than 1,900 metric tons of capacity to prevent disruptions in the orderly operation of any civilian nuclear power reactor that cannot reasonably provide adequate spent nuclear fuel storage capacity at the site of such reactor when needed.

42 U.S.C. § 10152

§ 10152. Available capacity for interim storage of
spent nuclear fuel

The Secretary, the Commission, and other authorized Federal officials shall each take such actions as such official considers necessary to encourage and expedite the effective use of available storage, and necessary additional storage, at the site of each civilian nuclear power reactor consistent with—

- (1) the protection of the public health and safety, and the environment;
- (2) economic considerations;
- (3) continued operation of such reactor;
- (4) any applicable provisions of law; and
- (5) the views of the population surrounding such reactor.

42 U.S.C. § 10153

§ 10153. Interim at—reactor storage

The Commission shall, by rule, establish procedures for the licensing of any technology approved by the Commission under section 10198(a) of this title for use at the site of any civilian nuclear power reactor. The establishment of such procedures shall not preclude the licensing, under any applicable procedures or rules of the Commission in effect prior to such establishment, of any technology for the storage of civilian spent nuclear fuel at the site of any civilian nuclear power reactor.

42 U.S.C. § 10154

§ 10154. Licensing of facility expansions and transshipments

(a) Oral argument

In any Commission hearing under section 189 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2239) on an application for a license, or for an amendment to an existing license, filed after January 7, 1983, to expand the spent nuclear fuel storage capacity at the site of a civilian nuclear power reactor, through the use of high-density fuel storage racks, fuel rod compaction, the transshipment of spent nuclear fuel to another civilian nuclear power reactor within the same utility system, the construction of additional spent nuclear fuel pool capacity or dry storage capacity, or by other means, the Commission shall, at the request of any party, provide an opportunity for oral argument with respect to any matter which the Commission determines to be in controversy among the parties. The oral argument shall be preceded by such discovery procedures as the rules of the Commission shall provide. The Commission shall require each party, including the Commission staff, to submit in written form, at the time of the oral argument, a summary of the facts, data, and arguments upon which such party proposes to rely that are known at such time to such party. Only facts and data in the form of sworn testimony or written submission may be relied upon by the parties during oral argument. Of the materials that may be submitted by the parties during oral argument, the Commission shall only consider those facts and data that are submitted in the form of sworn testimony or written submission.

(b) Adjudicatory hearing

(1) At the conclusion of any oral argument under subsection (a), the Commission shall designate any disputed question of fact, together with any remaining questions of law, for resolution in an adjudicatory hearing only if it determines that—

(A) there is a genuine and substantial dispute of fact which can only be resolved with sufficient accuracy by the introduction of evidence in an adjudicatory hearing; and

(B) the decision of the Commission is likely to depend in whole or in part on the resolution of such dispute.

(2) In making a determination under this subsection, the Commission—

(A) shall designate in writing the specific facts that are in genuine and substantial dispute, the reason why the decision of the agency is likely to depend on the resolution of such facts, and the reason why an adjudicatory hearing is likely to resolve the dispute; and

(B) shall not consider—

(i) any issue relating to the design, construction, or operation of any civilian nuclear power reactor already licensed to operate at such site, or any civilian nuclear power reactor for which a construction permit has been granted at such site, unless the Commission determines that any such issue substantially affects the design, construction, or operation of the facility or activity for which such

license application, authorization, or amendment is being considered; or

(ii) any siting or design issue fully considered and decided by the Commission in connection with the issuance of a construction permit or operating license for a civilian nuclear power reactor at such site, unless (I) such issue results from any revision of siting or design criteria by the Commission following such decision; and (II) the Commission determines that such issue substantially affects the design, construction, or operation of the facility or activity for which such license application, authorization, or amendment is being considered.

(3) The provisions of paragraph (2)(B) shall apply only with respect to licenses, authorizations, or amendments to licenses or authorizations, applied for under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) before December 31, 2005.

(4) The provisions of this section shall not apply to the first application for a license or license amendment received by the Commission to expand onsite spent fuel storage capacity by the use of a new technology not previously approved for use at any nuclear powerplant by the Commission.

(c) Judicial review

No court shall hold unlawful or set aside a decision of the Commission in any proceeding described in subsection (a) because of a failure by the Commission to use a particular procedure pursuant to this section unless—

(1) an objection to the procedure used was presented to the Commission in a timely fashion or there are

extraordinary circumstances that excuse the failure to present a timely objection; and

(2) the court finds that such failure has precluded a fair consideration and informed resolution of a significant issue of the proceeding taken as a whole.

42 U.S.C. § 10155

§ 10155. Storage of spent nuclear fuel

(a) Storage capacity

(1) Subject to section 10107 of this title, the Secretary shall provide, in accordance with paragraph (5), not more than 1,900 metric tons of capacity for the storage of spent nuclear fuel from civilian nuclear power reactors. Such storage capacity shall be provided through any one or more of the following methods, used in any combination determined by the Secretary to be appropriate:

(A) use of available capacity at one or more facilities owned by the Federal Government on January 7, 1983, including the modification and expansion of any such facilities, if the Commission determines that such use will adequately protect the public health and safety, except that such use shall not—

(i) render such facilities subject to licensing under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) or the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5801 et seq.); or

(ii) except as provided in subsection (c) require the preparation of an environmental impact statement under section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)), such¹ facility is already being used, or has previously been used, for such storage or for any similar purpose.²

¹ So in original. Probably should be preceded by “if”.

² So in original. The period probably should be a semicolon.

(B) acquisition of any modular or mobile spent nuclear fuel storage equipment, including spent nuclear fuel storage casks, and provision of such equipment, to any person generating or holding title to spent nuclear fuel, at the site of any civilian nuclear power reactor operated by such person or at any site owned by the Federal Government on January 7, 1983;

(C) construction of storage capacity at any site of a civilian nuclear power reactor.

(2) Storage capacity authorized by paragraph (1) shall not be provided at any Federal or non-Federal site within which there is a candidate site for a repository. The restriction in the preceding sentence shall only apply until such time as the Secretary decides that such candidate site is no longer a candidate site under consideration for development as a repository.

(3) In selecting methods of providing storage capacity under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the timeliness of the availability of each such method and shall seek to minimize the transportation of spent nuclear fuel, the public health and safety impacts, and the costs of providing such storage capacity.

(4) In providing storage capacity through any method described in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall comply with any applicable requirements for licensing or authorization of such method, except as provided in paragraph (1)(A)(i).

(5) The Secretary shall ensure that storage capacity is made available under paragraph (1) when needed, as determined on the basis of the storage needs specified in contracts entered into under section 10156(a)

of this title, and shall accept upon request any spent nuclear fuel as covered under such contracts.

(6) For purposes of paragraph (1)(A), the term “facility” means any building or structure.

(b) Contracts

(1) Subject to the capacity limitation established in subsections (a)(1) and (d), the Secretary shall offer to enter into, and may enter into, contracts under section 10156(a) of this title with any person generating or owning spent nuclear fuel for purposes of providing storage capacity for such spent fuel under this section only if the Commission determines that—

(A) adequate storage capacity to ensure the continued orderly operation of the civilian nuclear power reactor at which such spent nuclear fuel is generated cannot reasonably be provided by the person owning and operating such reactor at such site, or at the site of any other civilian nuclear power reactor operated by such person, and such capacity cannot be made available in a timely manner through any method described in subparagraph (B); and

(B) such person is diligently pursuing licensed alternatives to the use of Federal storage capacity for the storage of spent nuclear fuel expected to be generated by such person in the future, including—

(i) expansion of storage facilities at the site of any civilian nuclear power reactor operated by such person;

(ii) construction of new or additional storage facilities at the site of any civilian nuclear power reactor operated by such person;

(iii) acquisition of modular or mobile spent nuclear fuel storage equipment, including spent nuclear fuel storage casks, for use at the site of any civilian nuclear power reactor operated by such person; and

(iv) transshipment to another civilian nuclear power reactor owned by such person.

(2) In making the determination described in paragraph (1)(A), the Commission shall ensure maintenance of a full core reserve storage capability at the site of the civilian nuclear power reactor involved unless the Commission determines that maintenance of such capability is not necessary for the continued orderly operation of such reactor.

(3) The Commission shall complete the determinations required in paragraph (1) with respect to any request for storage capacity not later than 6 months after receipt of such request by the Commission.

(c) Environmental review

(1) The provision of 300 or more metric tons of storage capacity at any one Federal site under subsection (a)(1)(A) shall be considered to be a major Federal action requiring preparation of an environmental impact statement under section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)).

(2)(A) The Secretary shall prepare, and make available to the public, an environmental assessment of the probable impacts of any provision of less than 300 metric tons of storage capacity at any one Federal site under subsection (a)(1)(A) that requires the modification or expansion of any facility at the site, and a

discussion of alternative activities that may be undertaken to avoid such impacts. Such environmental assessment shall include—

- (i)** an estimate of the amount of storage capacity to be made available at such site;
 - (ii)** an evaluation as to whether the facilities to be used at such site are suitable for the provision of such storage capacity;
 - (iii)** a description of activities planned by the Secretary with respect to the modification or expansion of the facilities to be used at such site;
 - (iv)** an evaluation of the effects of the provision of such storage capacity at such site on the public health and safety, and the environment;
 - (v)** a reasonable comparative evaluation of current information with respect to such site and facilities and other sites and facilities available for the provision of such storage capacity;
 - (vi)** a description of any other sites and facilities that have been considered by the Secretary for the provision of such storage capacity; and
 - (vii)** an assessment of the regional and local impacts of providing such storage capacity at such site, including the impacts on transportation.
- (B)** The issuance of any environmental assessment under this paragraph shall be considered to be a final agency action subject to judicial review in accordance with the provisions of chapter 7 of Title 5. Such judicial review shall be limited to the sufficiency of such assessment with respect to the items described in clauses (i) through (vii) of subparagraph (A).

(3) Judicial review of any environmental impact statement or environmental assessment prepared pursuant to this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of section 10139 of this title.

(d) Review of sites and State participation

(1) In carrying out the provisions of this part with regard to any interim storage of spent fuel from civilian nuclear power reactors which the Secretary is authorized by this section to provide, the Secretary shall, as soon as practicable, notify, in writing, the Governor and the State legislature of any State and the Tribal Council of any affected Indian tribe in such State in which is located a potentially acceptable site or facility for such interim storage of spent fuel of his intention to investigate that site or facility.

(2) During the course of investigation of such site or facility, the Secretary shall keep the Governor, State legislature, and affected Tribal Council currently informed of the progress of the work, and results of the investigation. At the time of selection by the Secretary of any site or existing facility, but prior to undertaking any site-specific work or alterations, the Secretary shall promptly notify the Governor, the legislature, and any affected Tribal Council in writing of such selection, and subject to the provisions of paragraph (6) of this subsection, shall promptly enter into negotiations with such State and affected Tribal Council to establish a cooperative agreement under which such State and Council shall have the right to participate in a process of consultation and cooperation, based on public health and safety and environmental concerns, in all stages of the planning, development, modification, expansion, operation, and closure of storage

capacity at a site or facility within such State for the interim storage of spent fuel from civilian nuclear power reactors. Public participation in the negotiation of such an agreement shall be provided for and encouraged by the Secretary, the State, and the affected Tribal Council. The Secretary, in cooperation with the States and Indian tribes, shall develop and publish minimum guidelines for public participation in such negotiations, but the adequacy of such guidelines or any failure to comply with such guidelines shall not be a basis for judicial review.

(3) The cooperative agreement shall include, but need not be limited to, the sharing in accordance with applicable law of all technical and licensing information, the utilization of available expertise, the facilitating of permitting procedures, joint project review, and the formulation of joint surveillance and monitoring arrangements to carry out applicable Federal and State laws. The cooperative agreement also shall include a detailed plan or schedule of milestones, decision points and opportunities for State or eligible Tribal Council review and objection. Such cooperative agreement shall provide procedures for negotiating and resolving objections of the State and affected Tribal Council in any stage of planning, development, modification, expansion, operation, or closure of storage capacity at a site or facility within such State. The terms of any cooperative agreement shall not affect the authority of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission under existing law.

(4) For the purpose of this subsection, “process of consultation and cooperation” means a methodology by which the Secretary (A) keeps the State and eligible

Tribal Council fully and currently informed about the aspects of the project related to any potential impact on the public health and safety and environment; (B) solicits, receives, and evaluates concerns and objections of such State and Council with regard to such aspects of the project on an ongoing basis; and (C) works diligently and cooperatively to resolve, through arbitration or other appropriate mechanisms, such concerns and objections. The process of consultation and cooperation shall not include the grant of a right to any State or Tribal Council to exercise an absolute veto of any aspect of the planning, development, modification, expansion, or operation of the project.

(5) The Secretary and the State and affected Tribal Council shall seek to conclude the agreement required by paragraph (2) as soon as practicable, but not later than 180 days following the date of notification of the selection under paragraph (2). The Secretary shall periodically report to the Congress thereafter on the status of the agreements approved under paragraph (3). Any report to the Congress on the status of negotiations of such agreement by the Secretary shall be accompanied by comments solicited by the Secretary from the State and eligible Tribal Council.

(6)(A) Upon deciding to provide an aggregate of 300 or more metric tons of storage capacity under subsection (a)(1) at any one site, the Secretary shall notify the Governor and legislature of the State where such site is located, or the governing body of the Indian tribe in whose reservation such site is located, as the case may be, of such decision. During the 60-day period following receipt of notification by the Secretary of his decision to provide an aggregate of 300 or more

metric tons of storage capacity at any one site, the Governor or legislature of the State in which such site is located, or the governing body of the affected Indian tribe where such site is located, as the case may be, may disapprove the provision of 300 or more metric tons of storage capacity at the site involved and submit to the Congress a notice of such disapproval. A notice of disapproval shall be considered to be submitted to the Congress on the date of the transmittal of such notice of disapproval to the Speaker of the House and the President pro tempore of the Senate. Such notice of disapproval shall be accompanied by a statement of reasons explaining why the provision of such storage capacity at such site was disapproved by such Governor or legislature or the governing body of such Indian tribe.

(B) Unless otherwise provided by State law, the Governor or legislature of each State shall have authority to submit a notice of disapproval to the Congress under subparagraph (A). In any case in which State law provides for submission of any such notice of disapproval by any other person or entity, any reference in this part to the Governor or legislature of such State shall be considered to refer instead to such other person or entity.

(C) The authority of the Governor and legislature of each State under this paragraph shall not be applicable with respect to any site located on a reservation.

(D) If any notice of disapproval is submitted to the Congress under subparagraph (A), the proposed provision of 300 or more metric tons of storage capacity at the site involved shall be disapproved unless, during the first period of 90 calendar days of continuous

session of the Congress following the date of the receipt by the Congress of such notice of disapproval, the Congress passes a resolution approving such proposed provision of storage capacity in accordance with the procedures established in this paragraph and subsections (d) through (f) of section 10135 of this title and such resolution thereafter becomes law. For purposes of this paragraph, the term “resolution” means a joint resolution of either House of the Congress, the matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: “That there hereby is approved the provision of 300 or more metric tons of spent nuclear fuel storage capacity at the site located at _____, with respect to which a notice of disapproval was submitted by _____ on _____.”. The first blank space in such resolution shall be filled with the geographic location of the site involved; the second blank space in such resolution shall be filled with the designation of the State Governor and legislature or affected Indian tribe governing body submitting the notice of disapproval involved; and the last blank space in such resolution shall be filled with the date of submission of such notice of disapproval.

(E) For purposes of the consideration of any resolution described in subparagraph (D), each reference in subsections (d) and (e) of section 10135 of this title to a resolution of repository siting approval shall be considered to refer to the resolution described in such subparagraph.

(7) As used in this section, the term “affected Tribal Council” means the governing body of any Indian tribe within whose reservation boundaries there is located a potentially acceptable site for interim storage capacity of spent nuclear fuel from civilian nuclear power

reactors, or within whose boundaries a site for such capacity is selected by the Secretary, or whose federally defined possessory or usage rights to other lands outside of the reservation's boundaries arising out of congressionally ratified treaties, as determined by the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to a petition filed with him by the appropriate governmental officials of such tribe, may be substantially and adversely affected by the establishment of any such storage capacity.

(e) Limitations

Any spent nuclear fuel stored under this section shall be removed from the storage site or facility involved as soon as practicable, but in any event not later than 3 years following the date on which a repository or monitored retrievable storage facility developed under this chapter is available for disposal of such spent nuclear fuel.

(f) Report

The Secretary shall annually prepare and submit to the Congress a report on any plans of the Secretary for providing storage capacity under this section. Such report shall include a description of the specific manner of providing such storage selected by the Secretary, if any. The Secretary shall prepare and submit the first such report not later than 1 year after January 7, 1983.

(g) Criteria for determining adequacy of available storage capacity

Not later than 90 days after January 7, 1983, the Commission pursuant to section 553 of the Administrative Procedures Act, shall propose, by rule,

procedures and criteria for making the determination required by subsection (b) that a person owning and operating a civilian nuclear power reactor cannot reasonably provide adequate spent nuclear fuel storage capacity at the civilian nuclear power reactor site when needed to ensure the continued orderly operation of such reactor. Such criteria shall ensure the maintenance of a full core reserve storage capability at the site of such reactor unless the Commission determines that maintenance of such capability is not necessary for the continued orderly operation of such reactor. Such criteria shall identify the feasibility of reasonably providing such adequate spent nuclear fuel storage capacity, taking into account economic, technical, regulatory, and public health and safety factors, through the use of high-density fuel storage racks, fuel rod compaction, transshipment of spent nuclear fuel to another civilian nuclear power reactor within the same utility system, construction of additional spent nuclear fuel pool capacity, or such other technologies as may be approved by the Commission.

(h) Application

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, nothing in this chapter shall be construed to encourage, authorize, or require the private or Federal use, purchase, lease, or other acquisition of any storage facility located away from the site of any civilian nuclear power reactor and not owned by the Federal Government on January 7, 1983.

(i) Coordination with research and development program

To the extent available, and consistent with the provisions of this section, the Secretary shall provide

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spent nuclear fuel for the research and development program authorized in section 10198 of this title from spent nuclear fuel received by the Secretary for storage under this section. Such spent nuclear fuel shall not be subject to the provisions of subsection (e).

42 U.S.C. § 10156

§ 10156. Interim Storage Fund

(a) Contracts

(1) During the period following January 7, 1983, but not later than January 1, 1990, the Secretary is authorized to enter into contracts with persons who generate or own spent nuclear fuel resulting from civilian nuclear activities for the storage of such spent nuclear fuel in any storage capacity provided under this part: *Provided, however,* That the Secretary shall not enter into contracts for spent nuclear fuel in amounts in excess of the available storage capacity specified in section 10155(a) of this title. Those contracts shall provide that the Federal Government will (1) take title at the civilian nuclear power reactor site, to such amounts of spent nuclear fuel from the civilian nuclear power reactor as the Commission determines cannot be stored onsite, (2) transport the spent nuclear fuel to a federally owned and operated interim away-from-reactor storage facility, and (3) store such fuel in the facility pending further processing, storage, or disposal. Each such contract shall (A) provide for payment to the Secretary of fees determined in accordance with the provisions of this section; and (B) specify the amount of storage capacity to be provided for the person involved.

(2) The Secretary shall undertake a study and, not later than 180 days after January 7, 1983, submit to the Congress a report, establishing payment charges that shall be calculated on an annual basis, commencing on or before January 1, 1984. Such payment charges and the calculation thereof shall be published in the Federal Register, and shall become effective not

less than 30 days after publication. Each payment charge published in the Federal Register under this paragraph shall remain effective for a period of 12 months from the effective date as the charge for the cost of the interim storage of any spent nuclear fuel. The report of the Secretary shall specify the method and manner of collection (including the rates and manner of payment) and any legislative recommendations determined by the Secretary to be appropriate.

(3) Fees for storage under this part shall be established on a nondiscriminatory basis. The fees to be paid by each person entering into a contract with the Secretary under this subsection shall be based upon an estimate of the pro rata costs of storage and related activities under this part with respect to such person, including the acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance of any facilities under this part.

(4) The Secretary shall establish in writing criteria setting forth the terms and conditions under which such storage services shall be made available.

(5) Except as provided in section 10157 of this title, nothing in this chapter or any other Act requires the Secretary, in carrying out the responsibilities of this section, to obtain a license or permit to possess or own spent nuclear fuel.

(b) Limitation

No spent nuclear fuel generated or owned by any department of the United States referred to in section 101 or 102 of Title 5 may be stored by the Secretary in any storage capacity provided under this part unless such department transfers to the Secretary, for deposit in the Interim Storage Fund, amounts

equivalent to the fees that would be paid to the Secretary under the contracts referred to in this section if such spent nuclear fuel were generated by any other person.

(c) Establishment of Interim Storage Fund

There hereby is established in the Treasury of the United States a separate fund, to be known as the Interim Storage Fund. The Storage Fund shall consist of—

- (1) all receipts, proceeds, and recoveries realized by the Secretary under subsections (a), (b), and (e), which shall be deposited in the Storage Fund immediately upon their realization;
- (2) any appropriations made by the Congress to the Storage Fund; and
- (3) any unexpended balances available on January 7, 1983, for functions or activities necessary or incident to the interim storage of civilian spent nuclear fuel, which shall automatically be transferred to the Storage Fund on such date.

(d) Use of Storage Fund

The Secretary may make expenditures from the Storage Fund, subject to subsection (e), for any purpose necessary or appropriate to the conduct of the functions and activities of the Secretary, or the provision or anticipated provision of services, under this part, including—

- (1) the identification, development, licensing, construction, operation, decommissioning, and post-decommissioning maintenance and monitoring of any interim storage facility provided under this part;

- (2) the administrative cost of the interim storage program;
- (3) the costs associated with acquisition, design, modification, replacement, operation, and construction of facilities at an interim storage site, consistent with the restrictions in section 10155 of this title;
- (4) the cost of transportation of spent nuclear fuel; and
- (5) impact assistance as described in subsection (e).

(e) Impact assistance

(1) Beginning the first fiscal year which commences after January 7, 1983, the Secretary shall make annual impact assistance payments to a State or appropriate unit of local government, or both, in order to mitigate social or economic impacts occasioned by the establishment and subsequent operation of any interim storage capacity within the jurisdictional¹ boundaries of such government or governments and authorized under this part: *Provided, however,* That such impact assistance payments shall not exceed (A) ten per centum of the costs incurred in paragraphs (1) and (2), or (B) \$15 per kilogram of spent fuel, whichever is less;

(2) Payments made available to States and units of local government pursuant to this section shall be—

- (A) allocated in a fair and equitable manner with a priority to those States or units of local government suffering the most severe impacts; and

¹ So in original. Probably should be “jurisdictional”.

(B) utilized by States or units of local governments only for (i) planning, (ii) construction and maintenance of public services, (iii) provision of public services related to the providing of such interim storage authorized under this subchapter, and (iv) compensation for loss of taxable property equivalent to that if the storage had been provided under private ownership.

(3) Such payments shall be subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines necessary to ensure that the purposes of this subsection shall be achieved. The Secretary shall issue such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this subsection.

(4) Payments under this subsection shall be made available solely from the fees determined under subsection (a).

(5) The Secretary is authorized to consult with States and appropriate units of local government in advance of commencement of establishment of storage capacity authorized under this part in an effort to determine the level of the payment such government would be eligible to receive pursuant to this subsection.

(6) As used in this subsection, the term “unit of local government” means a county, parish, township, municipality, and shall include a borough existing in the State of Alaska on January 7, 1983, and any other unit of government below the State level which is a unit of general government as determined by the Secretary.

(f) Administration of Storage Fund

(1) The Secretary of the Treasury shall hold the Storage Fund and, after consultation with the Secretary, annually report to the Congress on the financial condition and operations of the Storage Fund during the preceding fiscal year.

(2) The Secretary shall submit the budget of the Storage Fund to the Office of Management and Budget triennially along with the budget of the Department of Energy submitted at such time in accordance with chapter 11 of Title 31. The budget of the Storage Fund shall consist of estimates made by the Secretary of expenditures from the Storage Fund and other relevant financial matters for the succeeding 3 fiscal years, and shall be included in the Budget of the United States Government. The Secretary may make expenditures from the Storage Fund, subject to appropriations which shall remain available until expended. Appropriations shall be subject to triennial authorization.

(3) If the Secretary determines that the Storage Fund contains at any time amounts in excess of current needs, the Secretary may request the Secretary of the Treasury to invest such amounts, or any portion of such amounts as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, in obligations of the United States—

(A) having maturities determined by the Secretary of the Treasury to be appropriate to the needs of the Storage Fund; and

(B) bearing interest at rates determined to be appropriate by the Secretary of the Treasury, taking into consideration the current average market yield on outstanding marketable obligations of the United States with remaining periods to maturity comparable to the maturities of such investments, except

that the interest rate on such investments shall not exceed the average interest rate applicable to existing borrowings.

(4) Receipts, proceeds, and recoveries realized by the Secretary under this section, and expenditures of amounts from the Storage Fund, shall be exempt from annual apportionment under the provisions of subchapter II of chapter 15 of Title 31.

(5) If at any time the moneys available in the Storage Fund are insufficient to enable the Secretary to discharge his responsibilities under this part, the Secretary shall issue to the Secretary of the Treasury obligations in such forms and denominations, bearing such maturities, and subject to such terms and conditions as may be agreed to by the Secretary and the Secretary of the Treasury. The total of such obligations shall not exceed amounts provided in appropriation Acts. Redemption of such obligations shall be made by the Secretary from moneys available in the Storage Fund. Such obligations shall bear interest at a rate determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, which shall be not less than a rate determined by taking into consideration the average market yield on outstanding marketable obligations of the United States of comparable maturities during the month preceding the issuance of the obligations under this paragraph. The Secretary of the Treasury shall purchase any issued obligations, and for such purpose the Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to use as a public debt transaction the proceeds from the sale of any securities issued under chapter 31 of Title 31, and the purposes for which securities may be issued under such Act are extended to include any purchase of such

obligations. The Secretary of the Treasury may at any time sell any of the obligations acquired by him under this paragraph. All redemptions, purchases, and sales by the Secretary of the Treasury of obligations under this paragraph shall be treated as public debt transactions of the United States.

(6) Any appropriations made available to the Storage Fund for any purpose described in subsection (d) shall be repaid into the general fund of the Treasury, together with interest from the date of availability of the appropriations until the date of repayment. Such interest shall be paid on the cumulative amount of appropriations available to the Storage Fund, less the average undisbursed cash balance in the Storage Fund account during the fiscal year involved. The rate of such interest shall be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury taking into consideration the average market yield during the month preceding each fiscal year on outstanding marketable obligations of the United States of comparable maturity. Interest payments may be deferred with the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury, but any interest payments so deferred shall themselves bear interest.

42 U.S.C. § 10157

§ 10157. Transportation

(a)(1)¹ Transportation of spent nuclear fuel under section 10156(a) of this title shall be subject to licensing and regulation by the Commission and by the Secretary of Transportation as provided for transportation of commercial spent nuclear fuel under existing law.

(2) The Secretary, in providing for the transportation of spent nuclear fuel under this chapter, shall utilize by contract private industry to the fullest extent possible in each aspect of such transportation. The Secretary shall use direct Federal services for such transportation only upon a determination of the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Secretary, that private industry is unable or unwilling to provide such transportation services at reasonable cost.

¹ So in original. No subsec. (b) was enacted.

42 U.S.C. § 10161

§ 10161. Monitored retrievable storage

(a) Findings

The Congress finds that—

- (1)** long-term storage of high-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel in monitored retrievable storage facilities is an option for providing safe and reliable management of such waste or spent fuel;
- (2)** the executive branch and the Congress should proceed as expeditiously as possible to consider fully a proposal for construction of one or more monitored retrievable storage facilities to provide such long-term storage;
- (3)** the Federal Government has the responsibility to ensure that site-specific designs for such facilities are available as provided in this section;
- (4)** the generators and owners of the high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel to be stored in such facilities have the responsibility to pay the costs of the long-term storage of such waste and spent fuel; and
- (5)** disposal of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel in a repository developed under this chapter should proceed regardless of any construction of a monitored retrievable storage facility pursuant to this section.

(b) Submission of proposal by Secretary

- (1)** On or before June 1, 1985, the Secretary shall complete a detailed study of the need for and feasibility of, and shall submit to the Congress a proposal for, the

construction of one or more monitored retrievable storage facilities for high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel. Each such facility shall be designed—

(A) to accommodate spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste resulting from civilian nuclear activities;

(B) to permit continuous monitoring, management, and maintenance of such spent fuel and waste for the foreseeable future;

(C) to provide for the ready retrieval of such spent fuel and waste for further processing or disposal; and

(D) to safely store such spent fuel and waste as long as may be necessary by maintaining such facility through appropriate means, including any required replacement of such facility.

(2) Such proposal shall include—

(A) the establishment of a Federal program for the siting, development, construction, and operation of facilities capable of safely storing high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, which facilities are to be licensed by the Commission;

(B) a plan for the funding of the construction and operation of such facilities, which plan shall provide that the costs of such activities shall be borne by the generators and owners of the high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel to be stored in such facilities;

(C) site-specific designs, specifications, and cost estimates sufficient to (i) solicit bids for the

construction of the first such facility; (ii) support congressional authorization of the construction of such facility; and (iii) enable completion and operation of such facility as soon as practicable following congressional authorization of such facility; and

(D) a plan for integrating facilities constructed pursuant to this section with other storage and disposal facilities authorized in this chapter.

(3) In formulating such proposal, the Secretary shall consult with the Commission and the Administrator, and shall submit their comments on such proposal to the Congress at the time such proposal is submitted.

(4) The proposal shall include, for the first such facility, at least 3 alternative sites and at least 5 alternative combinations of such proposed sites and facility designs consistent with the criteria of paragraph (1). The Secretary shall recommend the combination among the alternatives that the Secretary deems preferable. The environmental assessment under subsection (c) shall include a full analysis of the relative advantages and disadvantages of all 5 such alternative combinations of proposed sites and proposed facility designs.

(c) Environmental impact statements

(1) Preparation and submission to the Congress of the proposal required in this section shall not require the preparation of an environmental impact statement under section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)). The Secretary shall prepare, in accordance with regulations issued by the Secretary implementing such Act, an environmental assessment with respect to such

proposal. Such environmental assessment shall be based upon available information regarding alternative technologies for the storage of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. The Secretary shall submit such environmental assessment to the Congress at the time such proposal is submitted.

(2) If the Congress by law, after review of the proposal submitted by the Secretary under subsection (b), specifically authorizes construction of a monitored retrievable storage facility, the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) shall apply with respect to construction of such facility, except that any environmental impact statement prepared with respect to such facility shall not be required to consider the need for such facility or any alternative to the design criteria for such facility set forth in subsection (b)(1).

(d) Licensing

Any facility authorized pursuant to this section shall be subject to licensing under section 5842(3) of this title. In reviewing the application filed by the Secretary for licensing of the first such facility, the Commission may not consider the need for such facility or any alternative to the design criteria for such facility set forth in subsection (b)(1).

(e) Clarification

Nothing in this section limits the consideration of alternative facility designs consistent with the criteria of paragraph (b)(1) in any environmental impact statement, or in any licensing procedure of the Commission, with respect to any monitored, retrievable facility authorized pursuant to this section.

(f) Impact assistance

(1) Upon receipt by the Secretary of congressional authorization to construct a facility described in subsection (b), the Secretary shall commence making annual impact aid payments to appropriate units of general local government in order to mitigate any social or economic impacts resulting from the construction and subsequent operation of any such facility within the jurisdictional boundaries of any such unit.

(2) Payments made available to units of general local government under this subsection shall be—

(A) allocated in a fair and equitable manner, with priority given to units of general local government determined by the Secretary to be most severely affected; and

(B) utilized by units of general local government only for planning, construction, maintenance, and provision of public services related to the siting of such facility.

(3) Such payments shall be subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines are necessary to ensure achievement of the purposes of this subsection. The Secretary shall issue such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this subsection.

(4) Such payments shall be made available entirely from funds held in the Nuclear Waste Fund established in section 10222(c) of this title and shall be available only to the extent provided in advance in appropriation Acts.

(5) The Secretary may consult with appropriate units of general local government in advance of commencement of construction of any such facility in an effort to determine the level of payments each such unit is eligible to receive under this subsection.

(g) Limitation

No monitored retrievable storage facility developed pursuant to this section may be constructed in any State in which there is located any site approved for site characterization under section 10132 of this title. The restriction in the preceding sentence shall only apply until such time as the Secretary decides that such candidate site is no longer a candidate site under consideration for development as a repository. Such restriction shall continue to apply to any site selected for construction as a repository.

(h) Participation of States and Indian tribes

Any facility authorized pursuant to this section shall be subject to the provisions of sections 10135, 10136(a), 10136(b), 10136(d), 10137, and 10138 of this title. For purposes of carrying out the provisions of this subsection, any reference in sections 10135 through 10138 of this title to a repository shall be considered to refer to a monitored retrievable storage facility.

42 U.S.C. § 10162

§ 10162. Authorization of monitored retrievable storage

(a) Nullification of Oak Ridge siting proposal

The proposal of the Secretary (EC-1022, 100th Congress) to locate a monitored retrievable storage facility at a site on the Clinch River in the Roane County portion of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, with alternative sites on the Oak Ridge Reservation of the Department of Energy and on the former site of a proposed nuclear powerplant in Hartsville, Tennessee, is annulled and revoked. In carrying out the provisions of sections 10164 and 10165 of this title, the Secretary shall make no presumption or preference to such sites by reason of their previous selection.

(b) Authorization

The Secretary is authorized to site, construct, and operate one monitored retrievable storage facility subject to the conditions described in sections 10163 through 10169 of this title.

42 U.S.C. § 10163**§ 10163. Monitored Retrievable Storage Commission****(a)¹ Establishment**

(1)(A) There is established a Monitored Retrievable Storage Review Commission (hereinafter in this section referred to as the “MRS Commission”), that shall consist of 3 members who shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(B) Members of the MRS Commission shall be appointed not later than 30 days after December 22, 1987, from among persons who as a result of training, experience and attainments are exceptionally well qualified to evaluate the need for a monitored retrievable storage facility as a part of the Nation’s nuclear waste management system.

(C) The MRS Commission shall prepare a report on the need for a monitored retrievable storage facility as a part of a national nuclear waste management system that achieves the purposes of this chapter. In preparing the report under this subparagraph, the MRS Commission shall—

(i) review the status and adequacy of the Secretary’s evaluation of the systems advantages and disadvantages of bringing such a facility into the national nuclear waste disposal system;

¹ So in original. No subsec. (b) has been enacted.

(ii) obtain comment and available data on monitored retrievable storage from affected parties, including States containing potentially acceptable sites;

(iii) evaluate the utility of a monitored retrievable storage facility from a technical perspective; and

(iv) make a recommendation to Congress as to whether such a facility should be included in the national nuclear waste management system in order to achieve the purposes of this chapter, including meeting needs for packaging and handling of spent nuclear fuel, improving the flexibility of the repository development schedule, and providing temporary storage of spent nuclear fuel accepted for disposal.

(2) In preparing the report and making its recommendation under paragraph (1) the MRS Commission shall compare such a facility to the alternative of at-reactor storage of spent nuclear fuel prior to disposal of such fuel in a repository under this chapter. Such comparison shall take into consideration the impact on—

(A) repository design and construction;

(B) waste package design, fabrication and standardization;

(C) waste preparation;

(D) waste transportation systems;

(E) the reliability of the national system for the disposal of radioactive waste;

(F) the ability of the Secretary to fulfill contractual commitments of the Department under this chapter to accept spent nuclear fuel for disposal; and

(G) economic factors, including the impact on the costs likely to be imposed on ratepayers of the Nation's electric utilities for temporary at-reactor storage of spent nuclear fuel prior to final disposal in a repository, as well as the costs likely to be imposed on ratepayers of the Nation's electric utilities in building and operating such a facility.

(3) The report under this subsection, together with the recommendation of the MRS Commission, shall be transmitted to Congress on November 1, 1989.

(4)(A)(i) Each member of the MRS Commission shall be paid at the rate provided for level III of the Executive Schedule for each day (including travel time) such member is engaged in the work of the MRS Commission, and shall receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence in the same manner as is permitted under sections 5702 and 5703 of Title 5.

(ii) The MRS Commission may appoint and fix compensation, not to exceed the rate of basic pay payable for GS-18 of the General Schedule, for such staff as may be necessary to carry out its functions.

(B)(i) The MRS Commission may hold hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony and receive such evidence as the MRS Commission considers appropriate. Any member of the MRS Commission may administer oaths or affirmations to witnesses appearing before the MRS Commission.

(ii) The MRS Commission may request any Executive agency, including the Department, to furnish such

assistance or information, including records, data, files, or documents, as the Commission considers necessary to carry out its functions. Unless prohibited by law, such agency shall promptly furnish such assistance or information.

(iii) To the extent permitted by law, the Administrator of the General Services Administration shall, upon request of the MRS Commission, provide the MRS Commission with necessary administrative services, facilities, and support on a reimbursable basis.

(iv) The MRS Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services from experts and consultants to the same extent as is authorized by section 3109(b) of Title 5 at rates and under such rules as the MRS Commission considers reasonable.

(C) The MRS Commission shall cease to exist 60 days after the submission to Congress of the report required under this subsection.

42 U.S.C. § 10164

§ 10164. Survey

After the MRS Commission submits its report to the Congress under section 10163 of this title, the Secretary may conduct a survey and evaluation of potentially suitable sites for a monitored retrievable storage facility. In conducting such survey and evaluation, the Secretary shall consider the extent to which siting a monitored retrievable storage facility at each site surveyed would—

- (1) enhance the reliability and flexibility of the system for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste established under this chapter;
- (2) minimize the impacts of transportation and handling of such fuel and waste;
- (3) provide for public confidence in the ability of such system to safely dispose of the fuel and waste;
- (4) impose minimal adverse effects on the local community and the local environment;
- (5) provide a high probability that the facility will meet applicable environmental, health, and safety requirements in a timely fashion;
- (6) provide such other benefits to the system for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste as the Secretary deems appropriate; and
- (7) unduly burden a State in which significant volumes of high-level radioactive waste resulting from atomic energy defense activities are stored.

42 U.S.C. § 10165

§ 10165. Site selection

(a) In general

The Secretary may select the site evaluated under section 10164 of this title that the Secretary determines on the basis of available information to be the most suitable for a monitored retrievable storage facility that is an integral part of the system for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste established under this chapter.

(b) Limitation

The Secretary may not select a site under subsection (a) until the Secretary recommends to the President the approval of a site for development as a repository under section 10134(a) of this title.

(c) Site specific activities

The Secretary may conduct such site specific activities at each site surveyed under section 10164 of this title as he determines may be necessary to support an application to the Commission for a license to construct a monitored retrievable storage facility at such site.

(d) Environmental assessment

Site specific activities and selection of a site under this section shall not require the preparation of an environmental impact statement under section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)). The Secretary shall prepare an environmental assessment with respect to such selection in accordance with regulations issued by the Secretary implementing such Act. Such environmental

assessment shall be based upon available information regarding alternative technologies for the storage of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. The Secretary shall submit such environmental assessment to the Congress at the time such site is selected.

(e) Notification before selection

(1) At least 6 months before selecting a site under subsection (a), the Secretary shall notify the Governor and legislature of the State in which such site is located, or the governing body of the affected Indian tribe where such site is located, as the case may be, of such potential selection and the basis for such selection.

(2) Before selecting any site under subsection (a), the Secretary shall hold at least one public hearing in the vicinity of such site to solicit any recommendations of interested parties with respect to issues raised by the selection of such site.

(f) Notification of selection

The Secretary shall promptly notify Congress and the appropriate State or Indian tribe of the selection under subsection (a).

(g) Limitation

No monitored retrievable storage facility authorized pursuant to section 10162(b) of this title may be constructed in the State of Nevada.

42 U.S.C. § 10166

§ 10166. Notice of disapproval

(a) In general

The selection of a site under section 10165 of this title shall be effective at the end of the period of 60 calendar days beginning on the date of notification under such subsection,¹ unless the governing body of the Indian tribe on whose reservation such site is located, or, if the site is not on a reservation, the Governor and the legislature of the State in which the site is located, has submitted to Congress a notice of disapproval with respect to such site. If any such notice of disapproval has been submitted under this subsection, the selection of the site under section 10165 of this title shall not be effective except as provided under section 10135(c) of this title.

(b) References

For purposes of carrying out the provisions of this subsection, references in section 10135(c) of this title to a repository shall be considered to refer to a monitored retrievable storage facility and references to a notice of disapproval of a repository site designation under section 10136(b) or 10138(a) of this title shall be considered to refer to a notice of disapproval under this section.

¹ So in original. Probably should be “section.”

42 U.S.C. § 10167

§ 10167. Benefits agreement

Once selection of a site for a monitored retrievable storage facility is made by the Secretary under section 10165 of this title, the Indian tribe on whose reservation the site is located, or, in the case that the site is not located on a reservation, the State in which the site is located, shall be eligible to enter into a benefits agreement with the Secretary under section 10173 of this title.

42 U.S.C. § 10168

§ 10168. Construction authorization

(a) Environmental impact statement

(1) Once the selection of a site is effective under section 10166 of this title, the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) shall apply with respect to construction of a monitored retrievable storage facility, except that any environmental impact statement prepared with respect to such facility shall not be required to consider the need for such facility or any alternative to the design criteria for such facility set forth in section 10161(b)(1) of this title.

(2) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the consideration of alternative facility designs consistent with the criteria described in section 10161(b)(1) of this title in any environmental impact statement, or in any licensing procedure of the Commission, with respect to any monitored retrievable storage facility authorized under section 10162(b) of this title.

(b) Application for construction license

Once the selection of a site for a monitored retrievable storage facility is effective under section 10166 of this title, the Secretary may submit an application to the Commission for a license to construct such a facility as part of an integrated nuclear waste management system and in accordance with the provisions of this section and applicable agreements under this chapter affecting such facility.

(c) Licensing

Any monitored retrievable storage facility authorized pursuant to section 10162(b) of this title shall be subject to licensing under section 5842(3) of this title. In reviewing the application filed by the Secretary for licensing of such facility, the Commission may not consider the need for such facility or any alternative to the design criteria for such facility set forth in section 10161(b)(1) of this title.

(d) Licensing conditions

Any license issued by the Commission for a monitored retrievable storage facility under this section shall provide that—

- (1) construction of such facility may not begin until the Commission has issued a license for the construction of a repository under section 10135(d)¹ of this title;
- (2) construction of such facility or acceptance of spent nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste shall be prohibited during such time as the repository license is revoked by the Commission or construction of the repository ceases;
- (3) the quantity of spent nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste at the site of such facility at any one time may not exceed 10,000 metric tons of heavy metal until a repository under this chapter first accepts spent nuclear fuel or solidified high-level radioactive waste; and
- (4) the quantity of spent nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste at the site of such facility at any

¹ So in original. Section 10135(d) of this title does not relate to Commission issuance of license.

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one time may not exceed 15,000 metric tons of heavy metal.

42 U.S.C. § 10169

§ 10169. Financial assistance

The provisions of section 10136(c) or 10138(b) of this title with respect to grants, technical assistance, and other financial assistance shall apply to the State, to affected Indian tribes and to affected units of local government in the case of a monitored retrievable storage facility in the same manner as for a repository.

42 U.S.C. § 10172

§ 10172. Selection of Yucca Mountain site

(a) In general

(1) The Secretary shall provide for an orderly phase-out of site specific activities at all candidate sites other than the Yucca Mountain site.

(2) The Secretary shall terminate all site specific activities (other than reclamation activities) at all candidate sites, other than the Yucca Mountain site, within 90 days after December 22, 1987.

(b) Eligibility to enter into benefits agreement

Effective on December 22, 1987, the State of Nevada shall be eligible to enter into a benefits agreement with the Secretary under section 10173 of this title.

42 U.S.C. § 10222

§ 10222. Nuclear Waste Fund

(a) Contracts

(1) In the performance of his functions under this chapter, the Secretary is authorized to enter into contracts with any person who generates or holds title to high-level radioactive waste, or spent nuclear fuel, of domestic origin for the acceptance of title, subsequent transportation, and disposal of such waste or spent fuel. Such contracts shall provide for payment to the Secretary of fees pursuant to paragraphs (2) and (3) sufficient to offset expenditures described in subsection (d).

(2) For electricity generated by a civilian nuclear power reactor and sold on or after the date 90 days after January 7, 1983, the fee under paragraph (1) shall be equal to 1.0 mil per kilowatt-hour.

(3) For spent nuclear fuel, or solidified high-level radioactive waste derived from spent nuclear fuel, which fuel was used to generate electricity in a civilian nuclear power reactor prior to the application of the fee under paragraph (2) to such reactor, the Secretary shall, not later than 90 days after January 7, 1983, establish a 1 time fee per kilogram of heavy metal in spent nuclear fuel, or in solidified high-level radioactive waste. Such fee shall be in an amount equivalent to an average charge of 1.0 mil per kilowatt-hour for electricity generated by such spent nuclear fuel, or such solidified high-level waste derived therefrom, to be collected from any person delivering such spent nuclear fuel or high-level waste, pursuant to section 10143 of this title, to the Federal Government. Such

fee shall be paid to the Treasury of the United States and shall be deposited in the separate fund established by subsection (c). In paying such a fee, the person delivering spent fuel, or solidified high-level radioactive wastes derived therefrom, to the Federal Government shall have no further financial obligation to the Federal Government for the long-term storage and permanent disposal of such spent fuel, or the solidified high-level radioactive waste derived therefrom.

(4) Not later than 180 days after January 7, 1983, the Secretary shall establish procedures for the collection and payment of the fees established by paragraph (2) and paragraph (3). The Secretary shall annually review the amount of the fees established by paragraphs (2) and (3) above to evaluate whether collection of the fee will provide sufficient revenues to offset the costs as defined in subsection (d) herein. In the event the Secretary determines that either insufficient or excess revenues are being collected, in order to recover the costs incurred by the Federal Government that are specified in subsection (d), the Secretary shall propose an adjustment to the fee to insure full cost recovery. The Secretary shall immediately transmit this proposal for such an adjustment to Congress. The adjusted fee proposed by the Secretary shall be effective after a period of 90 days of continuous session have elapsed following the receipt of such transmittal unless during such 90-day period either House of Congress adopts a resolution disapproving the Secretary's proposed adjustment in accordance with the procedures set forth for congressional review of an energy action under section 6421 of this title.

(5) Contracts entered into under this section shall provide that—

(A) following commencement of operation of a repository, the Secretary shall take title to the high-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel involved as expeditiously as practicable upon the request of the generator or owner of such waste or spent fuel; and

(B) in return for the payment of fees established by this section, the Secretary, beginning not later than January 31, 1998, will dispose of the high-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel involved as provided in this subchapter.

(6) The Secretary shall establish in writing criteria setting forth the terms and conditions under which such disposal services shall be made available.

(b) Advance contracting requirement

(1)(A) The Commission shall not issue or renew a license to any person to use a utilization or production facility under the authority of section 2133 or 2134 of this title unless—

(i) such person has entered into a contract with the Secretary under this section; or

(ii) the Secretary affirms in writing that such person is actively and in good faith negotiating with the Secretary for a contract under this section.

(B) The Commission, as it deems necessary or appropriate, may require as a precondition to the issuance or renewal of a license under section 2133 or 2134 of this title that the applicant for such license shall have entered into an agreement with the Secretary for the

disposal of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel that may result from the use of such license.

(2) Except as provided in paragraph (1), no spent nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste generated or owned by any person (other than a department of the United States referred to in section 101 or 102 of Title 5) may be disposed of by the Secretary in any repository constructed under this chapter unless the generator or owner of such spent fuel or waste has entered into a contract with the Secretary under this section by not later than—

(A) June 30, 1983; or

(B) the date on which such generator or owner commences generation of, or takes title to, such spent fuel or waste;

whichever occurs later.

(3) The rights and duties of a party to a contract entered into under this section may be assignable with transfer of title to the spent nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste involved.

(4) No high-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel generated or owned by any department of the United States referred to in section 101 or 102 of Title 5 may be disposed of by the Secretary in any repository constructed under this chapter unless such department transfers to the Secretary, for deposit in the Nuclear Waste Fund, amounts equivalent to the fees that would be paid to the Secretary under the contracts referred to in this section if such waste or spent fuel were generated by any other person.

(c) Establishment of Nuclear Waste Fund

There hereby is established in the Treasury of the United States a separate fund, to be known as the Nuclear Waste Fund. The Waste Fund shall consist of—

- (1) all receipts, proceeds, and recoveries realized by the Secretary under subsections (a), (b), and (e), which shall be deposited in the Waste Fund immediately upon their realization;
- (2) any appropriations made by the Congress to the Waste Fund; and
- (3) any unexpended balances available on January 7, 1983, for functions or activities necessary or incident to the disposal of civilian high-level radioactive waste or civilian spent nuclear fuel, which shall automatically be transferred to the Waste Fund on such date.

(d) Use of Waste Fund

The Secretary may make expenditures from the Waste Fund, subject to subsection (e), only for purposes of radioactive waste disposal activities under subchapters I and II, including—

- (1) the identification, development, licensing, construction, operation, decommissioning, and post-decommissioning maintenance and monitoring of any repository, monitored,¹ retrievable storage facility² or test and evaluation facility constructed under this chapter;

¹ So in original. The comma probably should not appear.

² So in original. Probably should be followed by a comma.

- (2) the conducting of nongeneric research, development, and demonstration activities under this chapter;
- (3) the administrative cost of the radioactive waste disposal program;
- (4) any costs that may be incurred by the Secretary in connection with the transportation, treating, or packaging of spent nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste to be disposed of in a repository, to be stored in a monitored, retrievable storage site or to be used in a test and evaluation facility;
- (5) the costs associated with acquisition, design, modification, replacement, operation, and construction of facilities at a repository site, a monitored, retrievable storage site or a test and evaluation facility site and necessary or incident to such repository, monitored, retrievable storage facility² or test and evaluation facility; and
- (6) the provision of assistance to States, units of general local government, and Indian tribes under sections 10136, 10138, and 10199 of this title.

No amount may be expended by the Secretary under this subchapter for the construction or expansion of any facility unless such construction or expansion is expressly authorized by this or subsequent legislation. The Secretary hereby is authorized to construct one repository and one test and evaluation facility.

(e) Administration of Waste Fund

- (1) The Secretary of the Treasury shall hold the Waste Fund and, after consultation with the Secretary,

annually report to the Congress on the financial condition and operations of the Waste Fund during the preceding fiscal year.

(2) The Secretary shall submit the budget of the Waste Fund to the Office of Management and Budget triennially along with the budget of the Department of Energy submitted at such time in accordance with chapter 11 of Title 31. The budget of the Waste Fund shall consist of the estimates made by the Secretary of expenditures from the Waste Fund and other relevant financial matters for the succeeding 3 fiscal years, and shall be included in the Budget of the United States Government. The Secretary may make expenditures from the Waste Fund, subject to appropriations which shall remain available until expended. Appropriations shall be subject to triennial authorization.

(3) If the Secretary determines that the Waste Fund contains at any time amounts in excess of current needs, the Secretary may request the Secretary of the Treasury to invest such amounts, or any portion of such amounts as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, in obligations of the United States—

(A) having maturities determined by the Secretary of the Treasury to be appropriate to the needs of the Waste Fund; and

(B) bearing interest at rates determined to be appropriate by the Secretary of the Treasury, taking into consideration the current average market yield on outstanding marketable obligations of the United States with remaining periods to maturity comparable to the maturities of such investments, except

that the interest rate on such investments shall not exceed the average interest rate applicable to existing borrowings.

(4) Receipts, proceeds, and recoveries realized by the Secretary under this section, and expenditures of amounts from the Waste Fund, shall be exempt from annual apportionment under the provisions of subchapter II of chapter 15 of Title 31.

(5) If at any time the moneys available in the Waste Fund are insufficient to enable the Secretary to discharge his responsibilities under this subchapter, the Secretary shall issue to the Secretary of the Treasury obligations in such forms and denominations, bearing such maturities, and subject to such terms and conditions as may be agreed to by the Secretary and the Secretary of the Treasury. The total of such obligations shall not exceed amounts provided in appropriation Acts. Redemption of such obligations shall be made by the Secretary from moneys available in the Waste Fund. Such obligations shall bear interest at a rate determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, which shall be not less than a rate determined by taking into consideration the average market yield on outstanding marketable obligations of the United States of comparable maturities during the month preceding the issuance of the obligations under this paragraph. The Secretary of the Treasury shall purchase any issued obligations, and for such purpose the Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to use as a public debt transaction the proceeds from the sale of any securities issued under chapter 31 of Title 31, and the purposes for which securities may be issued under

such Act are extended to include any purchase of such obligations. The Secretary of the Treasury may at any time sell any of the obligations acquired by him under this paragraph. All redemptions, purchases, and sales by the Secretary of the Treasury of obligations under this paragraph shall be treated as public debt transactions of the United States.

(6) Any appropriations made available to the Waste Fund for any purpose described in subsection (d) shall be repaid into the general fund of the Treasury, together with interest from the date of availability of the appropriations until the date of repayment. Such interest shall be paid on the cumulative amount of appropriations available to the Waste Fund, less the average undisbursed cash balance in the Waste Fund account during the fiscal year involved. The rate of such interest shall be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury taking into consideration the average market yield during the month preceding each fiscal year on outstanding marketable obligations of the United States of comparable maturity. Interest payments may be deferred with the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury, but any interest payments so deferred shall themselves bear interest.