

# BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON AMERICA'S NUCLEAR FUTURE

July 29, 2011

The Honorable Dr. Steven Chu  
Secretary of Energy  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Chu:

At the direction of the President, you charged the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future with reviewing policies for managing the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle and recommending a new plan. We thank you for choosing us to serve as Co-Chairmen of the Commission and for selecting the talented and dedicated set of Commissioners with whom we serve.

We have sought to ensure that our review is comprehensive, open and inclusive. The Commission and its subcommittees have heard from hundreds of individuals and organizations on a wide range of issues through formal hearings, site visits, and written letters and comments submitted through the Commission web site. We have visited several communities across the country that have a keen interest in the matters before the Commission. We have also visited a number of other countries to gain insights as to how the United States might proceed. We are indebted to the many people who have offered us their expertise, advice and guidance.

As required by the Commission charter, we are submitting this draft report of the Commission for your review. The Commission has investigated a wide range of issues. This report includes recommendations covering topics including the approach to siting nuclear waste management facilities, the transport and storage of spent fuel and high-level waste, options for waste disposal, institutional arrangements for managing spent nuclear fuel and high-level wastes, reactor and fuel cycle technologies, and international considerations. We also make recommendations regarding the handling of the Nuclear Waste Fund.

The name of the Commission – the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future – has caused some observers to assume the Commission would make recommendations regarding the advisability or appropriate level of future U.S. reliance on nuclear power. We have stayed true to the specific tasks assigned to us in our charter and have not made such broader recommendations. We have, however, considered a wide range of possible scenarios for the future of nuclear energy in the

United States, to ensure that our recommendations can accommodate a full range of possibilities.

You directed that the Commission was not to serve as a siting body. We therefore have not recommended specific locations for any component or facility of the U.S. nuclear waste management system. We have also not issued any findings on the merits of Yucca Mountain or any other site as a repository. Furthermore, we have not defended or opposed the Administration's actions regarding Yucca Mountain. What we have endeavored to do is recommend a sound waste management approach that can lead to the resolution of the current impasse; an approach that neither includes nor excludes Yucca Mountain as an option for a repository and can and should be applied regardless of what site or sites are ultimately chosen to serve as the permanent disposal facility for America's spent nuclear fuel and other high-level nuclear wastes.

In keeping with our commitment to conduct an open and inclusive review, we will now seek public feedback on our draft report and will modify our report as appropriate. Our charter requires the Commission to deliver a final report to you by January 29, 2012. We intend to submit our final report on or before that date.

Respectfully submitted,



Lee H. Hamilton  
Co-Chairman



Brent Scowcroft  
Co-Chairman