Science Seminar

Friday, October 3
Knott Hall B01
3pm

Yucca Mountain high level nuclear waste repository- science, engineering, history, politics, and progress made (or lack thereof)

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For a long time, the primary impediment to greater use of nuclear power to meet our energy needs has been concern over what to do with nuclear waste. After considerable scientific study and evaluation of alternatives, it was decided that underground storage `in a stable geologic formation was the best alternative to pursue. Subsequent evaluations and scientific studies lead to the conclusion that the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada was the best location for the nuclear waste repository.

Design of the Yucca Mountain repository and its support facilities is essentially complete and a license application recently was submitted by the Department of Energy to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). As part of the license application, extensive safety studies were completed to assess human health and environmental impacts associated with the repository. The NRC is now evaluating the license application to determine whether the repository provides adequate protection of human health and the environment and should be built and operated.

The future of the Yucca Mountain repository will be heavily influenced by three things: 1) our need for energy independence and role of nuclear power in achieving this objective, 2) the outcome of the NRC review of the license application, and 3) the political climate within the various branches of government.

Refreshments will be served