

adverse conditions identified at each site. Due consideration shall also be given to the siting provisions specifying the basis for site evaluations in § 960.3-1-5, to the extent practicable, and diversity of rock types in § 960.3-1-2, if the circumstances so apply. If less than five geohydrologic settings are available for consideration, the above process shall be used to select two or more preferred sites from those settings that contain more than one potentially acceptable site, as required to obtain the number of sites to be nominated as suitable for characterization. For purposes of the second and subsequent repositories, due consideration shall also be given to the siting provision for regionality as specified in § 960.3-1-3. *Fourth*, each preferred site within a geohydrologic setting shall be evaluated as to whether such site is suitable for the development of a repository under the qualifying condition of each guideline specified in subparts C and D that does not require site characterization as a prerequisite for the application of such guideline. The guidelines considered appropriate to this evaluation have been selected on the basis of their exclusion under the definition of site characterization as specified in § 960.2. Although the final application of these guidelines, in accordance with the provisions set forth in appendix III of this part, does not require geologic data from site-characterization activities, such application will require additional data beyond those specified in appendix IV of this part, which will be obtained concurrently with site characterization. Such guidelines include those specified in § 960.4-2-8-2 (Site Ownership and Control) of subpart C; §§ 960.5-1(a)(1) and 960.5-1(a)(2) of subpart D (preclosure system guidelines for radiological safety and environmental quality, socioeconomic, and transportation); and §§ 960.5-2-1 through 960.5-2-7 of subpart D (Population Density and Distribution, Site Ownership and Control, Meteorology, Offsite Installations and Operations, Environmental Quality, Socioeconomic Impacts, and Transportation). This evaluation shall consider on balance those favorable conditions and potentially adverse conditions identified as such at a preferred site in

relation to the qualifying condition of each such guideline. For each such guideline, this evaluation shall focus on the suitability of the site for the development of a repository by considering the activities from the start of site characterization through decommissioning and shall support a finding by the DOE in accordance with the application requirements set forth in appendix III of this part. *Fifth*, each preferred site within a geohydrologic setting shall be evaluated as to whether such site is suitable for site characterization under the qualifying conditions of those guidelines specified in subparts C and D that require characterization (i.e., subsurface geologic, hydrologic, and geochemical data gathering). Such guidelines include those specified in § 960.4-1(a) (postclosure system guideline); §§ 960.4-2-1 through 960.4-2-8-1 of subpart C (Geohydrology, Geochemistry, Rock Characteristics, Climatic Changes, Erosion, Dissolution, Tectonics, Human Interference, and Natural Resources); § 960.5-1(a)(3) (preclosure system guideline for ease and cost of siting, construction, operation, and closure); and § 960.5-2-8 through 960.5-2-11 of subpart D (Surface Characteristics, Rock Characteristics, Hydrology, and Tectonics). This evaluation shall consider on balance the favorable conditions and potentially adverse conditions identified as such at a preferred site in relation to the qualifying condition of each such guideline. For each such guideline, this evaluation shall focus on the suitability of the site for characterization and shall support a finding by the DOE in accordance with the application requirements set forth in appendix III of this part.

§ 960.3-2-2-3 Comparative evaluation of all sites proposed for nomination.

Sixth, for those potentially acceptable sites to be proposed for nomination, as determined by the process specified in § 960.3-2-2-2, a reasonable comparative evaluation of each such site with all other such sites shall be made. For each site and for each guideline specified in subparts C and D, the DOE shall summarize the evaluations and findings specified under § 960.3-2-2-

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1 and under the fourth and fifth provisions of § 960.3-2-2-2. Each such summary shall allow comparisons to be made among sites on this basis of each guideline.

§ 960.3-2-2-4 The environmental assessment.

To document the process specified above, and in compliance with section 112(b)(1)(E) of the Act, an environmental assessment shall be prepared for each site proposed for nomination as suitable for characterization. Each such environmental assessment shall describe the decision process by which such site was proposed for nomination as described in the preceding six steps and shall contain or reference the evidence that supports such process according to the requirements of § 960.3-1-4-2 and appendix IV of this part. As specified in the Act, each environmental assessment shall include an evaluation of the effects of the site-characterization activities at the site on public health and safety and the environment; a discussion of alternative activities related to site characterization that may be taken to avoid such impact; and an assessment of the regional and local impacts of locating a repository at the site. The draft environmental assessment for each site proposed for nomination as suitable for characterization shall be made available by the DOE for public comment after the Secretary has notified the Governor and legislature of the State in which the site is located, and the governing body of the affected Indian tribe where such site is located, of such impending availability.

§ 960.3-2-2-5 Formal site nomination.

After the final environmental assessments have been prepared, the Secretary shall nominate at least five sites that he determines suitable for site characterization for the selection of a repository site, and, in so doing, he shall cause to have published in the FEDERAL REGISTER a notice specifying the sites so nominated and announcing the availability of the final environmental assessments for such sites. This determination by the Secretary shall be based on the final environmental assessments for such sites, including, in

particular, consideration of the available evidence, evaluations, and the resultant findings for the guidelines of subparts C and D so specified under the fourth and fifth provisions of § 960.3-2-2-2. Before nominating a site, the Secretary shall notify the Governor and legislature of the State in which the site is located, and the governing body of the affected Indian tribe where such site is located, of such nomination and the basis for such nomination.

§ 960.3-2-3 Recommendation of sites for characterization.

After the nomination of at least five sites as suitable for site characterization for the selection of the first repository, the Secretary shall recommend in writing to the President not less than three candidate sites for such characterization. The recommendation decision shall be based on the available geophysical, geologic, geochemical, and hydrologic data; other information; associated evaluations and findings reported in the environmental assessments accompanying the nominations; and the considerations specified below, unless the Secretary certifies that such available data will not be adequate to satisfy applicable requirements of the Act in the absence of further preliminary borings or excavations. On the basis of the evidence and in accordance with the siting provision specifying the basis for site evaluations in § 960.3-1-5, the sites nominated as suitable for characterization shall be considered as to their order of preference as candidate sites for characterization. Subsequently, the siting provisions specifying diversity of geohydrologic settings, diversity of rock types, and, after the first repository, consideration of regionality in §§ 960.3-1-1, 960.3-1-2, and 960.3-1-3, respectively, shall be considered to determine a final order of preference for the characterization of such sites. Considering this order of preference together with the available siting alternatives specified in the Act, the sites recommended as candidate sites for characterization shall offer, on balance, the most advantageous combination of characteristics and conditions for the successful development of repositories