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## IG report criticizes NRC chairman over Yucca Mountain decision process

By Amy Harder | *National Journal* | June 10, 2011

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The chairman of the [Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#) made unilateral decisions to shut down Yucca Mountain and didn't fully inform the other commissioners about his actions, [according to a critical report](#) released on Friday by the commission's inspector general.

NRC Chair Gregory Jaczko "was not forthcoming with the other Commissioners about his intent to stop work" on the Yucca Mountain repository application, the report says. Jaczko stopped work on key parts of the application as they were nearing completion at the end of fiscal 2010, according to the IG.

"The chairman anticipated that proceeding to close out in this manner could be controversial and viewed as a policy decision for full Commission consideration. Therefore... he strategically provided three of the four other Commissioners with varying amounts of information about his intention to proceed to closure," the report says.

The report was released on Friday by the House Energy and Commerce Committee. NRC Inspector General Hubert Bell will testify on Tuesday to the Environment and Economy Subcommittee on his report, which was completed and sent to members of Congress and the commission on Monday.

The report did not find that Jaczko acted illegally, which the chairman preemptively pointed out in a statement on Wednesday.

"The conclusions of the report reaffirm that my actions have been and remain consistent with established law, guidance, and my authorities as Chairman," Jaczko said in the statement. He also anticipated the report's critical findings that he did not adequately communicate with his fellow commissioners. "The closeout of the Yucca Mountain license review has been a complicated issue, with dedicated and experienced people holding different viewpoints. All NRC Chairmen have the responsibility to make difficult and sometimes controversial decisions," he said.

The report will likely inflame already fired-up Republicans and Democrats who are upset that President Obama shuttered the project as he vowed to do on the campaign trail in 2008.

Jaczko will testify to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on Thursday regarding his commission's 60-day report on the Japanese nuclear disaster. But questions about the IG's report will surely arise as well. He is not expected to testify at the Tuesday House hearing.

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