

RECEIVED

EIS000059

OCT 04 1999

STATEMENT OF
ROBERT R. LOUX, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR, NEVADA AGENCY FOR NUCLEAR PROJECTS

TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF CIVILIAN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

REGARDING THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR A GEOLOGIC REPOSITORY FOR THE DISPOSAL OF SPENT
NUCLEAR FUEL AND HIGH-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE AT YUCCA
MOUNTAIN, NYE COUNTY, NEVADA

PRESENTED AT THE PUBLIC HEARING
IN GOLDFIELD, NEVADA
OCTOBER 4, 1999

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is our basic national charter for protection of the environment. Among its purposes, and of great importance in considering a high-level nuclear waste disposal site at Yucca Mountain, is *"fulfilling the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations."* The NEPA process, of which this Draft Environmental Impact Statement is a part, *"is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on understanding of environmental consequences, and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment."* The environment referred to in NEPA includes the human environment, and protection of human health and safety is implicit in the goals of the Act.

The NEPA procedures are designed to *"insure that environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken."* And, the purpose of the NEPA regulations is to assure that federal agencies respond according to the letter and spirit of the Act.

We are here today because the NEPA regulations include the requirement that federal agencies hold hearings to record, and then consider, the comments of the public on EIS's they intend to issue. In the Final EIS, agencies must incorporate these comments, or explain why they did not incorporate them. Agencies must also accept written comments from the public on the Draft EIS's they issue.

1 [In participating in the NEPA process for the proposed Yucca Mountain high-level nuclear waste repository project, it is important to remember that this is not just another federal project. The Yucca Mountain program is entirely unprecedented in its scope, its time frame, the geographical area it encompasses (as a result of the nationwide nuclear materials transportation campaign it requires), and the nature and extent of the potential impacts associated with it. Yet this draft document treats Yucca Mountain as if it were just another dam, pier, or road.]

Given the transportation scenarios contained in the draft EIS, rural Nevada communities such as Tonopah, Goldfield, Beatty, and Amargosa Valley could be more heavily impacted by shipments of radioactive materials destined for Yucca Mountain than any other communities in the country. That is because two of the proposed rail spur routes, at least one of the heavy haul truck routes, and an alternative route for legal weight truck shipments would pass through or very close to these communities. All or nearly all of the spent fuel and high-level waste slated for disposal could be shipped through northern Nye County and Esmeralda County.

According to the Draft EIS, Tonopah, Goldfield and Beatty are potentially affected by construction and operation of the Caliente and Carlin rail corridors. Either of these corridors could

EIS000059

2 under the mostly truck scenario. The adverse impacts of these shipments would be similar to those of HHT shipments. The larger number of LWT shipments, averaging 5 to 10 trucks or more per day, could result in higher routine radiation exposures and heightened levels of risk.

3 The State of Nevada will be submitting extensive written comments on this Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a high-level nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain. It is our hope that these comments and those of all others will be seriously considered, and that a reasonable No Action alternative (as opposed to the unreasonable and unrealistic ones contained in the draft document) is selected as the preferred action in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.