

JOAN KING'S
COMMENTS SUBMITTED
BY MARCI MCLENDON

CONCERNING YUCCA MOUNTAIN

EIS000179

U.S. Nuclear Waste Storage Policy

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you in the manner. I am Joan King. I live in Sautee, Georgia about 90 miles north of here. I've followed nuclear issues for about 20 years; and though I'm not a physicist, I've acquired a certain amount of technical competency through professional workshops and training seminars.

I've also developed an on-going dialogue with State and Congressional legislators regarding nuclear waste and other aspects of nuclear technology. The experience has been disheartening because it quickly becomes obvious most of our lawmakers have little or no understanding of the problem.

Briefly, let me mention just two cases in point. At a meeting with State legislators regarding the transportation of nuclear waste through Georgia, one man remarked, "What's this 'you-ka' you keep talking about." The man had never heard of Yucca Mountain, yet he went on to cast a vote on the subject at hand.

The other case was at the Federal level when a Congressman who was considering the Nuclear Waste Policy Act challenged me with the statement, "Joan, you know all this resistance to Yucca Mountain is purely political." This was just after the American Institute of Physics publication PHYSICS TODAY dedicated a whole issue to radioactive waste listing very real technical problems like fast flow paths and thermal loading.

1 [] Politicians don't have time to examine the details. They count on their aides who in turn listen to industry spokespersons. Input from the Department of Energy is equally unreliable because it comes from a source desperate for a solution. They have sunk too much money on the project to change course. The fact remain, the closer we look at Yucca Mountain, the less suitable it becomes. [] I won't go into the details. I'm sure you will hear them from others.

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Joan O. King

304 Manor Drive, Sautee, GA

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[We are now faced with the hardest move of all and one that may be impossible from a psychological standpoint, and that is to do nothing We have to admit we made a mistake. Worse. We have to admit that right now, there *is* no really acceptable solution to the problem.

We have created a monster in the form of a waste product for which there is no closed cycle. But if we don't do this, if we don't face up to the magnitude of a waste product for which there is no safe long-term disposal, the problem will continue to grow.

Perhaps, eventually we *will* have to bury our spent fuel and other toxic and radioactive waste products at Yucca Mountain or some other site, but if we open Yucca before we have learned our lesson, there is little hope for the future.]

Joan O. King
304 manor Drive
Santee, GA 305771