

EIS000249

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14 MS. ALLISTER: Good evening. My name is  
15 Pam Allister. I am a resident of Emmett, Idaho,  
16 which is a town in a valley not too far from here.  
17 And I am also the director of the Snake River  
18 Alliance working in the Boise office. The Snake  
19 River Alliance is a nuclear watchdog group that  
20 celebrates its 20th birthday this year.

21 I am speaking as an individual this  
22 evening, and in part on behalf of my family. I at  
23 one time was a Nevada resident. I have a daughter  
24 and a sister who now live there. My sister living  
25 not too far from this site.

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1 I have three points that I am going to  
2 cover. I don't have a formal presentation. I am  
3 going to be extemporaneous as I possibly can.

1

4 The first is the issue of public notice  
5 for this hearing. And I understand that the draft  
6 EIS was released on Friday, the 13th of August,  
7 which was a time ago. However, our scrutiny has  
8 not revealed any public notice of this meeting. I  
9 have been informed that there was public notice in  
10 a Friday newspaper, which was just several days  
11 ago.

12 I need to do some research into the NEPA  
13 process of public information to see if we have had  
14 adequate time by that process between the time of  
15 notice and the time of the meeting. What lends  
16 particular confusion to this is that at our office  
17 we monitor these things daily by e-mail from all  
18 kinds of sources. This particular hearing date has  
19 had three different dates. It has gone forward and  
20 halfway, and then all the way back or something  
21 like that. So it lended a great deal of confusion  
22 to us who are professionals, and I wonder what  
23 impact it had on the general public.

24 My second point is around the issue of  
25 some of the basic assumptions that underlie the

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1 concept and the work of Yucca Mountain. And I have  
2 gone to a number of meetings and heard a number of  
3 reports, and I always come away feeling really  
4 fascinated by the science.

5 I have a degree in human ecology;  
6 however, I took a great deal of geology in college.  
7 I have some advanced training in other areas. When  
8 I hear the scientists and engineers talking I just  
9 glom right onto the fascination of it. And it  
10 sometimes takes me a little while to come to the  
11 realization that what I am hearing may be based on  
12 some flawed assumptions. Some flawed basic  
13 assumptions of which I have identified. Possibly  
14 three of which I would like to list.

15 The first assumption is -- and I have  
16 two degrees in science -- is that science can fix  
17 or do anything or everything. And if it can't do  
18 it right now it will sooner or later figure out how  
19 to do it. I was recalling this as I was hearing  
20 some of information about this draft EIS and whole  
21 notion of how many times what the canisters are  
22 going to made of, and how long they are going to  
23 live. It seems as if it has been an evident flow,  
24 sort of an experimental process. No, it is this  
25 one. No, it is that one. But underneath that

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1 assumption is yes, we'll find a canister because we  
2 are scientists and it will work no matter what.

3           The second flawed assumption is one that  
4 is age old, which is that the ends justify the  
5 means. And I learned that in simple philosophy  
6 class. That is something to debate. And what that  
7 means to me in this particular situation is that  
8 justice and the common good will be served by  
9 forcing a state who does not wish to have this  
10 waste in their state to take it anyway because we  
11 need them as a nation to do it. I think that the  
12 ramifications of that kind of thinking down the  
13 road somewhere will turn around and bite us, and we  
14 will be sorry that we are doing this environmental  
15 injustice to a group of people.

2...

16           The third flawed assumption, and this  
17 one is even more abstract, is that by constructing,  
18 designing, constructing, and opening Yucca Mountain  
19 we will somehow relieve our nation of addressing  
20 that complex public policy issue as it relates to  
21 energy, and energy use, and energy projection. And  
22 helps us, at least for awhile, postpone that  
23 pressing problem of what we are going to do with  
24 the ever-increasing and ever more dangerous weapons  
25 in commercial nuclear waste that is being

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1 generated.

2 As I was being briefed today for this  
3 evening's meeting I had a deja vu, and this is my  
4 third point. And that is when I started my job  
5 several years ago there was a very exciting project  
6 that was just getting breaking ground as it were at  
7 INEEL to deal with waste that is buried in pits and  
8 trenches that are basically unlined, and pose a  
9 danger to the aquifer in Idaho, the Snake River  
10 aquifer.

11 And I began to notice that I was having  
12 a feeling about Yucca Mountain that I had for two  
13 and a half years about this particular site, which  
14 is called Pit Nine. And that was I visited Pit  
15 Nine and the construction site several times as a  
16 guest of the contractor and the laboratory, and I  
17 was led through briefings and tours by very  
18 enthusiastic, very inspired, and very cogent  
19 scientist-engineers of all sorts. And they would  
20 tell me one thing after another about how this  
21 marvelous contraption was going to roll down these  
22 tracks, and dig up this dirt, and sort it out, and  
23 put it in little containers, and send it off to the  
24 right place, and seal it off and not expose the  
25 public to danger, and so on and so forth.

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1                   And it used to absolutely drive me crazy  
2 when I went on this tour because I had some common  
3 sense. I base myself in common sense. And I would  
4 look at this contraption and I would say, it is  
5 Rube Goldberg. It will never work. And sure  
6 enough, it didn't work. It ended this life by  
7 dying in a snare of legal suits and cross suits.

3

8                   And as I look at Yucca Mountain and the  
9 moving target as it were of what its mission is,  
10 and how it is going to accomplish it, and I look at  
11 the people who are going to receive this waste, and  
12 the parties that are engaged in this process, I am  
13 beginning to have the feeling that we are having a  
14 much bigger Pit Nine rolling down the tracks.

15 Thank you very much.

16                   MS. SWEENEY: Thank you.

17                   MR. BROWN: Thank you. As I mentioned before  
18 that concludes presentations by those who signed up  
19 ahead of time. But if anybody else has joined us  
20 or anybody else would like to make a comment for  
21 the record at this time, feel free to step up to  
22 the microphone. Okay. Please go ahead. Again, if  
23 you can identify yourself for the court reporter?  
24 Thank you.

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