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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0601

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**Statement
Of
The Honorable Diana DeGette
Regarding
The Transport and Storage of Nuclear Waste
November 16, 1999**

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Solving this country's nuclear waste dilemma is essential to the future environmental health and safety of this country. In our attempts to utilize nuclear power we have created dangerous radioactive waste and by products which need to be properly secured and stored. To date, we as a nation have struggled on where and how to properly dispose of this waste without compounding existing storage problems or exposing United States citizens to unnecessary risks.

1 A primary concern for my constituents and me is the potential for accidents during the transportation of the spent nuclear fuel through the dangerous mountain passes and heavily populated urban areas of Colorado. I understand that both the I-70 and I-25 corridors are candidates for the transportation of this waste. In 1984, Denver survived a brush with disaster from a deadly cargo when a tractor-trailer carrying torpedoes rolled onto Colorado's most congested highway interchange, the intersection of I-25 and I-70 also known as the Mousetrap, tying up traffic for most of a day. Fortunately, the torpedoes did not detonate, but it brings home the seriousness of this subject and that it is impossible to plan for all contingencies. If this waste moves, there must be assurances that it will be transported with the utmost care and attention to public and environmental health. In addition, we must provide local communities and support personnel proper funding and training to prepare them in the event of an accident.

3 I also remain concerned about the designation of Yucca Mountain as a temporary storage facility without a final determination on its suitability as a permanent storage facility. The selection and utilization of a permanent storage facility for the waste must be based on sound science and and it must be officially certified by the Department of Energy as a safe, long-term disposal site. We should not jump to a decision if there is any question that a disposal site will not protect the American people today or in the future. Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments.