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20 MR. ZELLER: Thank you. My name is Lou Zeller.
21 I'm on the staff of the Blue Ridge Environmental
22 Defense League, and I live in North Carolina.
23 To begin with, it's been interesting to sit
24 here toady today and hear some of the previous
25 speakers, representatives from the public

1 utilities commission, explaining how dangerous
2 this material was to leave on its present site
3 locations. I guess they know better than anyone
4 else how dangerous this stuff is, and they don't
5 want it, either. The others that I think are
6 worth mentioning in a brief period are those who
7 stand to gain financially from this. I would
8 point out Duke Power's representative. These
9 people would not be here if there was not
10 financial gain in it for them.
11 The substance of my comments has to do with
12 emergency response. I told you I work for the
13 Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League. Our work
14 in North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia takes us
15 to many rural communities across the southeast.
16 We work with county emergency personnel who are
17 entrusted with early response to hazards. When we
18 asked them about their readiness to respond to
19 nuclear transport accidents, they answered
20 professionally, saying, quote, we'll just go out
21 there and keep people away until state or federal
22 officials arrive. This is probably the best they
23 could do under the circumstances. In an
24 interview, the western North Carolina emergency
25 coordinator told me that, quote, there is no

1 response team anywhere in this part of the state,
2 and for the foreseeable future there is no money
3 in local budgets to equip us with any first
4 response to radioactive spills.
5 The remote river valleys and steep grades of
6 Appalachia are legendary. Accidents can occur
7 anyplace, anytime. And North Carolina has many
8 miles of isolated rail and highways. At Saluda
9 the steepest standard-gauge main-line railroad in
10 the United States drops 253 feet per mile. That's
11 a 4.8-percent grade. When we spoke to the Norfolk
12 & Southern captain who has oversight of that line
13 and told him about the potential for nuclear waste
14 transportation, he said, "They wouldn't dare do
15 it." The CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads chase
16 the French Broad River valley, the Nolichucky
17 gorge through the Appalachian Mountains, through
18 remote stretches of rivers famous among white-
19 water rafters for their steep slopes and their
20 distance from civilization. For example, the
21 Norfolk & Southern Railroad crosses the French
22 Broad River near Hot Springs at Deep Water Bridge,
23 where the mountains rise 2,200 feet above the
24 river. These are transport routes through which
25 nuclear wastes would be transported.

1 Volunteer fire departments in rural counties
2 are good at putting out house fires and brush
3 fires. I served on the Laurel volunteer fire
4 department in Madison County. We took special
5 training to handle propane tank emergencies using
6 handbuilt water chucks. Traffic control is always
7 of consideration at an emergency scene. Any fire
8 or accident would immediately draw a crowd.
9 Onlookers arrive as soon as the fire department,
10 sometimes sooner. Oftentimes there were traffic
11 jams reducing traffic flow to a one-lane crawl,
12 day or night, fair weather or foul. This would
13 certainly slow or perhaps deny access to federal
14 or state emergency management officials attempting
1 15 to reach nuclear accident sites. The concerns of
16 local officials reflect their on-the-scene
17 responsibility, while state officials faced with
18 limited budgets and staff make plans based upon
19 current realities. In North Carolina's Division
20 of Emergency Management, the lead planner has four
21 staff and a whole state to cover. It is not
22 possible under these circumstances to be ready
23 with credible emergency response plans, training
24 and equipment with proposed shipments to Yucca
25 Mountain.

1 How much time do I have left?

2 MR. LAWSON: About 45 seconds.

3 MR. ZELLER: About 45 seconds? I would use

4 that to echo some of the concerns about transport

2 5 routes. Our good friends at the Nevada Agency for

6 Nuclear Products completed a study in 1995, which

7 could have been used by the DOE in this analysis,

8 which reveals that there are 821 waste shipments

9 via rail through North Carolina, 917 shipments via

10 rail through South Carolina, 3,866 waste shipments

11 via rail and highway through Tennessee and 2,650

12 shipments via rail and highway through Georgia.

13 Why did the DOE not use that to do a realistic

14 analysis of these shipments?

15 Finally and in closing I would like to also

16 echo our concerns for our brothers and sisters

3... 17 living near Yucca Mountain. The treaty of Ruby

18 Valley and the legitimate claims to Yucca Mountain

19 by the Piute/Shoshone have been ignored. The

20 historical record reveals an illegal federal land

21 grab based on transit privileges which were

22 unilaterally extended by this country, extended to

23 occupation and, ultimately, military takeover. On

24 this basis alone the Yucca Mountain repository

25 project should be abandoned and the native rights

3 cont. 1 under the treaty of 1873 restored. Thank you.

2 MS. SWEENEY: Thank you.

3 MR. LAWSON: Thank you, sir. Our next

4 speaker is Janet Zeller. She'll be followed by

5 Leo Goldberg and Gwen Carroll.

6