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THE FACILITATOR: Dick Martin.

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2 MR. MARTIN: My name is Dick Martin. I'm the
3 superintendent of Death Valley National Park.

4 Thank you for the opportunity this evening.
5 I appreciate you coming to our part of the desert. My
6 comments will represent the official opinions of the
7 National Park Service and Death Valley National Park
8 management.

9 Several points that I will make have already
10 been made, but I will emphasize a few things slightly
11 differently.

12 Death Valley is the largest national park in
13 the lower 48 states. Death Valley has been in existence
14 since 1933 as a national monument, and later as a national
15 park. The park and related concessions and directly
16 related businesses account for over seven million dollars
17 in annual payroll a year and upwards of 200 million dollars
18 in tourist spending each year to Inyo county and the other
19 two counties in Nevada that are adjacent to Death Valley.

20 As one of the most beautiful and fascinating
21 deserts in the world, Death Valley increases the quality of
22 life for our visitors and area residents and include
23 international visitors. Death Valley is a world-class
24 location known throughout the world as one of the hottest
25 and beautiful locations on earth.

1 I have three concerns regarding the proposed
2 waste repository that have the potential, I believe high
3 potential, to impact park tourism economy and protected
4 park resources. And let me emphasize regarding park
5 resources that Death Valley National Park is designated by
6 act of Congress. It's the will of the people. The park is
7 for preservation and perpetuity, for all generations of
8 future Americans as well as present generations, and that
9 all resources, including water, constitute a federal
10 reserve protected area.

11 First, water quality. As has already been
12 mentioned, the aquifer that underlies eastern -- western
13 Nevada, including Yucca Mountain, is known as the Death
14 Valley water flow system. All water that comes to Death
15 Valley flows under, around, or through the Yucca Mountain
16 area. I don't personally know how far below, but it's
17 there. That is the best information geologically and
18 hydrologically that exists today. Any threats to that
19 water, constitute threats to Death Valley National Park
20 resources.

21 Let me emphasize the sensitivity of those
22 resources. Devil's Hole, which is a detached unit of the
23 Death Valley -- and let me point it out on the map here.
24 It's over here in the area of Ash Meadows. Devil's Hole is
25 a detached unit of Death Valley National Park. It has

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1 endangered species. The Devil's Hole pupfish occupy the
2 smallest known habitat of any vertebrate animal on earth.
3 These animals have been protected by the National Park
4 Service since the 1950s. We have gone to the Supreme Court
5 to protect those, and the Supreme Court has given us
6 mandate to maintain the water level and water quality in
7 Devil's Hole, and we do that consistently, including
8 activities with the State of Nevada Water Quality Program.

9 Down the aquifer flow is Death Valley
10 National Park itself. As has been expressed, the water
11 that flows underneath Yucca Mountain surfaces on the east
12 side of Death Valley, the west side of the Funeral
13 Mountains, all resources in Death Valley. Water is life in
14 the desert, and the without the quality and quantity of
15 water, the desert and life in Death Valley are not going to
16 exist.

17 There are multiple springs in the Funeral
18 Mountains that sustain economic development, including much
19 of the tourism that I mentioned earlier. They sustain
20 communities, including long-term occupancy by Native
21 Americans, and the water also sustains national resources,
22 including other sensitive species, such as, for example,
23 the desert bighorn wild sheep. All sheep have to have
24 water to drink on occasion, and they are dependent upon
25 many of the springs that surface on the east side of Death

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1 having been cleaned up, still shows impacts of the cleanup
2 itself. Any cleanup of hazardous material has an impact.
3 It's not just the hazardous material that has an impact on
4 national park resources. Let me emphasize again, every
5 single national park resource is protected for the American
6 people.

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7 The third is an item that has not been
8 mentioned previously, night lighting. The air quality in
9 this part of the United States and visual acuity to see the
10 moon and the stars is very high. This is a covenant
11 resource that we oftentimes don't consider of value, but it
12 is of value. Dark nights where astronomers can view stars,
13 as well as the public can enjoy stars, is an important
14 resource to Death Valley National Park.

15 We believe -- I haven't read it anywhere --
16 but we believe as a fairly safe presumption that given a
17 10,000-year security plan, which, again, I find a little
18 hard to comprehend, will result in fences, guards, bright
19 lights, somewhat similar, as has been mentioned in other
20 ways, to a maximum security prison. Yucca Mountain is only
21 12 miles from Death Valley. We believe that will be an
22 imposition on the scenic resources of Death Valley National
23 Park, particularly at night. We believe that this project,
24 if that is true, would significantly decrease this desert
25 quality.

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1 Again, thank you for this opportunity. I
2 appreciate it. We want you to continue to communicate with
3 us and keep us apprised of your programs. We will supply
4 extensive written comments before the February deadline.

5 Thank you.

6 THE FACILITATOR: Pauline Esteves. Is she here?

7 Yes. All right.

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