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 Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
 U.S. Department of Energy
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Dear Ms. Dixon:

1... After reading the Environmental Impact Statement Draft I have found a few things disturbing to me in the idea of using Yucca Mountain as a repository of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste. I agree that we must come up with some where or some way to dispose of these things but I think DOE is rushing in to it. [The biggest problem I have with the proposed draft is that with many of the situations involving any impact on the environment or people it uses words such as "unlikely". This seems to tell me that you are not really sure what will happen. If this is the case then I think you must wait and do more studies and test. Granted, nothing is going to be a hundred percent positive for results but there is too much "maybe" or "small amounts" and "unlikely".]

2 The closest year round resident is only 14 miles away from the site. The closest farming is only 19 miles south of the proposed site. That is not very far away. I am from the state of Washington, and have seen some of the effects and potential problems with radioactive waste and people. [The Hanford site caused many problems and I think the potential hazards would be even greater in storing the entire countries radioactive waste. Not just these farmers or residents are in potentially hazardous area, the animals and environment as well is at risk. It took a Federal courts appeal to change the air quality standards set by the new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency National Ambient Air Quality Standard for the DOE to be able to operate its proposed site.]

3 In addition to air quality problems, [the DOE also wants the construction and emplacement of waste packages in a mass of volcanic rock. Again the DOE states that it is "unlikely" that any additional silicic activity would occur. However in 1992, there was an earthquake at Little Skull Mountain measuring 5.6 on the Richter scale. Little Skull Mountain is located 12 miles southeast of the proposed site. Of course the DOE estimates that after closure there is a 1 in 7,000 chance of volcanic disruption for the first 10,000 years. But how long does it take before this spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste is no longer hazardous or dangerous to humans and the environment?]

4... [Furthermore, there is also surface and ground water that flows near the proposed site at Yucca Mountain. For example, the Fortymile Canyon river/waterway flows just east of Yucca Mountain itself. The Buckboard waterway flows from the north. The Armagosa River flowing from the west along side Yucca Mountain down to the south of Yucca Mountain. The DOE also states that "In the distant future groundwater would contain

- 4 cont. small quantities of radionuclides and chemical toxic substances.”(s-42) Again the DOE says that the impact on plants and animals would be small and “unlikely” to have adverse impacts.
- 5 I am also worried about the animals in the area especially the desert tortise. The DOE also states that “Death or displacement of individual members of some animal species, including the desert tortise, as a result of site clearing and vehicle traffic would be unavoidable.”(s-63) If this is the case, we might see the end of animals such as the desert tortise. Once animals start dying out it effects the whole food chain. As a result it could cause another animal or plant to become extinct before nature is ready for it.
- 6 The next problem I have with the proposal is the transportation. The idea of having radioactive waste on our highways does not seem like a good one. If an accident occurred in a major city and the radioactive waste was spilled what would happen? I didn’t find any information on what the DOE or the government would do if this occurred. All I found was possible impacts that didn’t make sense. From 1 to 4 traffic fatalities would be likely to occur due to traffic accidents? That’s what the DOE said. But if a traffic accident occurred and radioactive waste was spilled I think there is a much higher potential for deaths. Furthermore, the DOE is planning on 49,500 truck shipments from different plants across the country to the Yucca mountain site in Nevada. With this many trucks on the highways I think there is substantial potential for an accident. Along with trucks they have proposed to use railways as a source of transportation. Maybe the railways might be safer but if there are 300 shipments there is a possibility for a major accident as well.
- 7 Above all is the fact that the Western Shoshone people made a treaty in 1863, which gave them the rights to land, including Yucca Mountain itself. There are still disputes on who has rights to the land, but that did not slow the DOE down at all. I think the Shoshones have suffered enough loss with out the government and the DOE taking their land. I think this should be the main goal for the government and the DOE. They should establish an agreement before they just begin construction on land that they might not even have the rights to. There should be some type of settlement on this issue before anything occurs.

1 cont. I think there are a lot of things that need to be done before any construction should occur. There are too many small or unlikely things that might happen. It doesn’t seem to me like there is enough information on the different issues to begin. The possibilities talked about in the draft seemed toned down or even sugar coated. I think the potential for disaster is much greater then estimated in the draft. Radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel can cause significant irreversible damage to the environment. I think there should be more time spent on something that has to last for thousands of years.]

Sincerely,

Chris Bailey

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