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10       NOV 16 1999       MR. NEWTON: Thank you for the opportunity  
11       to be here today. My name is Fletcher Newton. I'm the  
12       president of the Power Resources. We're a uranium  
13       production company. We employ 148 people in Wyoming  
14       and Nebraska, and we produce uranium by leaching it out  
15       of the ground. We actually use the groundwater where  
16       the uranium deposits are located. The water picks up  
17       the uranium and we treat the water and return it to the  
18       environment. We produce no tailings, we produce no  
19       open pits, we move no earth.

20                       The quality of the water we use when we're  
21       finished with it, water which is not suitable for human  
22       consumption to begin with, in most cases the quality of  
23       that water is better when we're finished than what it  
24       was when we started.

25                       I'm not here today however as a

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1 representative of the nuclear industry. I'm here as  
2 someone who is concerned about the future of our  
3 environment and the question of our society's sources  
4 of energy in the future.

5 I grew up literally about 15 minutes away  
6 from here. I had my high school graduation across the  
7 street. And when I walked out of that building about  
8 25 years ago, I believed that our government was a good  
9 thing; that it had the interests of our country at  
10 heart, and that it was made up of people who were  
11 dedicated to serving the public good.

12 Many years ago that government our  
13 government told nuclear utilities that they needed to  
14 contribute the money to a fund to provide for a  
15 national repository of nuclear spent fuel. Sixteen  
16 billion dollars was collected from rate payers;  
17 sixteen billion dollars from rate payers all over the  
18 country.

19 When it came time for the government to  
20 deliver on that promise, when it came time for them to  
21 tell us what they had done with that money, they simply  
22 said, "We're sorry, we're not ready." The delay in  
23 the construction of Yucca Mountain has become a scandal  
24 of titanic proportion.

25 I travel all over the world as part of my

1 job. I've spent the last three years living and  
2 working in the former Soviet Union. I can tell you the  
3 delay in this project has made the United States the  
4 laughingstock of the international community.

5 Unfortunately, we have allowed ourselves  
6 to be held hostage by the narrowest of the special  
7 interest groups, organizations that routinely spread  
8 the worst kinds of misinformation and distort  
9 scientific fact, groups that constantly criticize  
10 without offering any alternative to the question of  
11 where our energy will come from in the future.

12 Look outside today and you will see a  
13 brown cloud. Go to any major city in the United States  
14 and you will find that the air there contains mercury,  
15 carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide.

16 Nuclear energy produces none of these  
17 things. It does produce a very small amount of spent  
18 fuel. And the question we face today is where should  
19 we put that fuel.

20 Because we have failed to answer that  
21 question, Yucca Mountain now runs the risk of becoming 2 (continued)  
22 a monument to the worst kind of government  
23 inefficiency, insensitivity and indecisiveness. This  
24 delay, this inability to rely on dispassionate  
25 scientific fact, this will force us to effectively

1 | abandon nuclear energy as a viable source of energy in  
2 | the future.

3 |                   Richard Rhodes, an author who, as many of  
4 | you know, wrote a book on the making of the atomic bomb  
5 | for which he won a Pulitzer price, recently hosted a  
6 | television program on the question of nuclear energy  
7 | and specifically the issue of what to do with spent  
8 | fuel. At the end of that program he said the  
9 | following:

10 |                   "Civilizations run on energy. What will  
11 | our descendants think? What will they make of our  
12 | decision to reject this awesome source of energy? Will  
13 | they applaud us for having the courage to say no, or  
14 | will they condemn us for surrendering to our fears?"

3 15 |                   This Environmental Impact Statement  
16 | provides an exhaustive analysis of the Yucca Mountain  
17 | project. It answers virtually every reasonable  
18 | question about the safety of this site.

19 |                   I'm asking you today to adopt the findings  
20 | of that study, and not to surrender to irrational  
21 | fears, and to justify the hopes the expectations and  
22 | the confidence that a 17-year-old boy had when he  
23 | walked out of this building some 25 years ago across  
24 | the street. Thank you.

25 |                   MR. BROWN: Thank you.