

Epstein

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**JANUARY 20, 2000, STATEMENT BY HEDY EPSTEIN ON BEHALF OF THE ST. LOUIS, MO BRANCH OF WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM (WILPF), 438 No. Skinker, St. Louis, MO 63112, AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY HEARING IN ST. LOUIS, MO ON DISPOSAL OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL AND HIGH-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE AT YUCCA MOUNTAIN, NEVADA.**

**I, Hedy Epstein, am speaking on behalf of the over 200 members of the St. Louis, MO Branch of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).**

**Many members of WILPF remember how, in the 1950s, the Atomic Energy Commission assured us that nuclear reactors would be "safe, clean and cheap." Today we face the horrible reality that they are "hazardous, dirty and expensive." Let's face it...the developers of nuclear reactors really did not understand the monsters they were creating. Thus, we will pay for their ignorance and misjudgement and the government's complicity for the rest of our lives.**

1

**Perusal of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement shows how incredibly complex the Yucca Mountain repository would be. To its credit the DOE does not promise 100% safety. Still the uncertainties are obvious in such statements as these:**

- "...Design of the repository will continue to evolve..." S-20**
- "...The system will help retard the release of radioactive waste material to the accessible environment for long periods..." SS-13**
- "...Uncertainty in the analyses and findings..." S-30**
- "...Some of the studies are ongoing and some of the information is incomplete..." S-30**
- "...In the distant future ground water would contain small quantities of radionuclides and chemically toxic substances..." S-42**

**Therefore we recommend that time should be taken to make very sure that no more such uncertainties exist before proceeding.**

**In 1998 the St. Louis City Board of Aldermen passed a resolution, stating that St. Louis was not prepared for an accident and that nothing should move until there is a permanent burial site in operation.**

2...

**According to a statement by the Attorney General's office in Nevada:**

**The current stockpile of spent nuclear fuel rods will require 75.8 million container miles.**

**The transport containers will require 10,000 train loads, plus 28,000 truck loads of highly contaminated spent fuels.**

2 cont.

All of this makes me, makes us feel very insecure. It is not known who would be liable if there is an accident and who would be responsible for cleaning up. Is it the fire department, the police? And accidents do happen, witness the railroad accident in nearby Belleville, IL earlier this week, where 15 freight cars, each carrying 130,000 pounds of coal, left the track, causing a house to come off its foundation. Other concerns we have: Should the United States amass over 70,000 metric tons of high level radioactive waste in one location? Do we, as citizens, want trains and trucks, with armed escorts, carrying high level radioactive waste on our highways and railroad tracks during the 30 years of transport, involving 43 states?

- 3 At the very least no shipment should occur until the earthquake prone Yucca Mountain site has been approved and the repository has been built and is in operation. Transport risks involve: Accidents from fire, derailling, collisions, natural catastrophies, as well as sabotage and terrorism.

- 4 Because St. Louis is centrally located, it is on several of the proposed train and truck routes, S-22 and S-23. It is estimated that a shipments would travel through St. Louis on an average of every other day for 30 years. 79 of the 103 operating commercial nuclear power reactors are loacted east of the Mississippi river. Therefore we suggest that before proceeding with shipments, routes through unpopulated areas, which bypass large cities, be developed.

We want to remind the Commission that the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA) requires the Commission to adopt a final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), to the extent practicable as part of the Commission's decision making license application.

- 5 In conclusion, I just want to simply state: The information contained in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, clearly demonstrates how hazardous and insecure the entire process of disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high level radioactive waste is, beginning with the containers, through transportation and final repository.