Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste

Comment Sheet

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Comments: (If possible, please reference section number and/or page number in document if applicable.)

TIME CAPSULE — Thank citizen for concern

HEARTLAND – ACROSS ROADS — THANK UTILITIES + DOE for Safety

CAHOKIA → 1000

WE DO ALL SHARE THE EARTH

HYBRIS — RR → n

SECURITY • NO NEED TO RUSH SOLUTIONS •

Source of this problem – Nuclear weapons, not nuclear power.

DEFENSE ~~$~~ NEED to Be focused on SECURITY →

Please note: For your comment(s) to be considered in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, your comment(s) need to be received by the Department of Energy by February 9, 2000. To the extent practicable the Department will consider comments received after February 9.

Please feel free to attach additional pages; more postage may be needed. If you prefer to mail your comments, you may use the back side of this sheet as a postage-paid, self-mailer. To do so, fold in thirds along the dotted line so address and postage-paid notice are visible; then secure with tape.

I planned to give these remarks orally, but I had to leave by 2PM and had not yet been called to speak in spite of having arrived before the 11AM starting time of the hearing:

Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of the DOE,
I thank you for holding this hearing in St. Louis. And I want to say up front that I appreciate the work done by the DOE to investigate safe alternatives for the storage of hazardous radioactive waste. I also thank the representatives of the electric utilities who have spoken today, for their concern and care in the use of nuclear power to produce energy.

Finally, I want to thank the citizens here today, because your vigilance and your interest has had an important impact on influencing the Department of Energy and the utilities to use care and caution in the handling of radioactive materials.

We are here to discuss the potential transport of hazardous radioactive waste through St. Louis, and as a part of that discussion, to address the idea of moving radioactive waste to a disposal site in Nevada, a state that does not want it.

1 I think all of us agree that we have a problem. I live less than a mile from the railroad tracks that may carry some of this waste. And I don't want it running through my neighborhood.

2 We collectively have created this problem. Let me note however that the source of this problem is really not the electric industry or the Department of Energy. Rather it is the arms industry. Nuclear weapons are the source of the problem. *Atoms for Peace*, under President Dwight Eisenhower, became the focus of a governmental effort to find some redeeming qualities to nuclear fission. While the government was busy building nuclear warheads, our government sought to sell Atoms for Peace to the public. A variety of laws then made nuclear power attractive, and profitable, to the electric utilities. Today we collectively live with the results of the decisions made by our government to encourage nuclear production of electricity. I think all of us in this room know that there is a significant hazard in handling and storing of waste. Where we differ, I think, is over the level of confidence we place in our ability to handle it safely.

3 It seems to me that as we look at scenarios offered by the Department of Energy—100 years vs. 10,000 years, doing nothing vs. doing something—that a practical consideration is to leave the existing waste where it is for now and monitor it carefully while we continue to look for better alternatives. Let's put the 100 year scenario into effect that way. Let's take the next 50 years, to handle carefully the waste where it is, and learn what we can about various sites for storage, before rushing into a decision that may well be unsatisfactory.

My mind boggles at a 10,000 year scenario. What hubris we have to think we will be able to fashion something adequate for that length of time. Just 1000 yeas ago, St. Louis was center of one of the most advanced civilizations of its time in the world. Today, Cahokia mounds hold more mysteries than facts, even though we are learning a lot about the people of that time. World wide, we can find many more civilizations that lasted 200 or 300 years and then were lost. Even in those civilizations like China where a continuous written history has been maintained, archeologists in recent years have uncovered long lost
4 sites. 10,000 years? We have a responsibility to the future to take our time about this decision.

5 More importantly, let us agree that the *major* problem and the major threat to our security is not the train traffic through our community, it is the 10,000 warheads here and in Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union. The nuclear threat is real. Let's work together to see that the government -- and the Department of Energy in particular -- has the funds necessary to research solutions to the nuclear problem. Nuclear disarmament is an essential part of finding the solution to the nuclear waste problem. Moving some of our military budget to finding solutions to the nuclear waste problem will enable us to use those dollars to find real security. Thank you.

Thursday, January 20, 2000.
America's Center, St. Louis
David A. Wilson

2