

JAN 13 2000

1 MS. O'CONNOR: Hello. My name is Amy O'Connor and I'm representing myself, no organization. Thanks for coming to Salt Lake. I appreciate you being here and having a hearing. Though I have to say that I heard about this hearing from a friend. I've never been to one of these nuclear hearings, and apparently there wasn't a lot of public outreach. And I really wish that if you have formal hearings or whatever it is that you do a better job getting it out to the public.

2 ... Basically, as a resident of Salt Lake City I oppose the use of Yucca Mountain for any disposal of nuclear waste, whether high or low or any other kind of level. My reasons for opposing your proposal are as follows. First of all, no alternative actions are really considered in the EIS, and I understand that that violates the intent of NEPA.

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4 Secondly, I understand that, as others have mentioned, the Shoshone Indians never sold the land that is now called Yucca Mountain and that the U.S. Government now claims it owns. I also understand that Yucca Mountain is a sacred site to the Shoshone. Now is the time to respect Native Americans and to let them have a say in what is to happen to their native lands, and I would add to that not just tribal leaders, but the whole of the people.

2 Third, there seems to be a strong opposition to the proposal in Nevada, and I do not believe we should be forcing the citizens of Nevada to take on the nuclear waste of the eastern and the western nuclear industry.

7 Fifth, I oppose the transportation of nuclear waste across the country. Such transportation makes us vulnerable to accidents as well as sabotage, which has also been pointed out today. I'd like to ask you what the worst case scenario due to either accident or sabotage is and how well we could protect people from the consequence of such a disaster. I would venture a guess that people that are indeed at risk from nuclear accidents and that disaster-proof casks have simply not been designed, as people have mentioned, they haven't really been tested. I'm really concerned about that.

And I believe the risk of sabotage is particularly severe. Again, as a representative from the CEQ has pointed out, the EIS doesn't really adequately address this issue at all. I think it's a very serious issue in this day and age.

5 Another reason, there is evidence, including evidence from a DOE scientist I was told named Jerry Szmansky that Yucca Mountain is close enough to fault lines that is earthquake prone, and I understand that others have confirmed these findings. Others today have mentioned some of that, that there have actually been recent earthquakes, which I wasn't aware of.

An earthquake could probably damage the casks that hold the nuclear waste and let nuclear material escape either or both into the air and the aquifer underneath Yucca Mountain. Even if we're lucky enough and don't have earthquakes, the casks are not leakproof in the long run and will definitely deteriorate and leak and release materials into the aquifer.

In the desert region where water is scarce and populations are in fact booming these days, I don't think we can risk a contamination, whether it happens today, in 20 years, or in 10,000 years. I think it's irresponsible.

6 ... Finally, we should be discouraging the eastern or other nuclear industry from continuing to produce waste that we do not have any real capability of handling. A creative economics professor of mine once referred to the flush-the-toilet economics theory. The theory explains how by flushing the toilet we do not have to pay for the consequences of our actions. At the time this professor was referring to how industry can

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pollute the environment without having to pick up the tab for the consequences of their actions. They profited from a deteriorating environment that adversely affects everyone.

Today I think we must not let the nuclear industry flush the toilet only to let the waste end up in our western back yard, and I would add again into native people's back yards. The industry must take responsibility for its actions and so does the DOE; and if there is no safe way of really disposing of the nuclear wastes that we're generating, and I have yet to see a proposal that would indicate such techniques exist, the nuclear industry should be discouraged from generating any more and should put its vast resources into safer methods of energy production. As the gentleman earlier pointed out, if only we put that kind of money into safer alternatives, we would be a lot further ahead and we may not have to deal with so many nuclear waste issues.

So we should be phasing out the production of nuclear waste production, as far as I'm concerned, and I think it's the only sensible plan for the future, finally. |

Thanks again for your time.