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Mr. Charles Thomas Smit
 1617 East Hiawatha Drive, Apt. 1
 Wabasha, Minnesota 55981-1774
 Telephone: (651) 565-0273
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Wendy R. Dixon, EIS Project Manager
 Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
 U.S. Department of Energy
 P.O. Box 30307, Mail Stop 010
 North Las Vegas, Nevada 89036-0307

Dear Ms. Dixon:

I am writing today to respond to the draft EIS of July 1999. I have read the Summary and the first two chapters of Volume I, and a few spots of concern regarding sabotage, seismicity, volcanic activity, and criticality events within the repository. These are my main concerns with regard to the repository proposal, along with concern about the transportation of these wastes from great distances over decades.

Let me credential myself a little: B.A., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 18th, 1967. No further advanced degree, and thirty-three years of independent study focused on life/death issues, including nuclear arms control and disarmament, nuclear waste, capital punishment, conscription, and legal induced abortion frequency and characteristics. Published success has been limited. Written efforts have been almost continuous.

I have Site Characterization Progress Reports from 1989-1996, Number 1 through Number 14, inclusive. I began following the topic closely when NSP had just completed construction of Prairie Island Units 1 & 2, in about 1976. My interest was reinvigorated in 1996 by an off-site ISFSI controversy in the county just north of us. I did a photo essay on the potential transportation route from Prairie Island to the proposed off-site ISFSI, site 'P', so I am somewhat familiar with the situation, and motivated by NSP's ISFSI just 35-40 miles up river from my home town.

¹ I am skeptical about the science involved in forecasting radiological impacts and latent cancers leading to deaths. We only have 55 years of history to judge from, given events in New Mexico, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Nevada and the South Pacific. My sense is that our track record on this issue is far from commendable, although improving if you take government and DOE propaganda at face value. I don't.

Given 37.5 million deaths in World War I for military personnel, and a similar number from legal induced abortion frequency in the U.S. from 1967-1999, I have a rather dim view of human potential, and am less than sanguine about humanity's moral integrity. That said, let me forecast a strategic nuclear conflict breaking out before or shortly after the repository is closed. ^{2...} Let me suggest the possibility of an enemy so diabolical as to place a nuclear warhead in a waste package with a timer that will have it detonate after the majority of the wastes have been gathered into a neat, concentrated pile.

For the sake of brevity, let me also forecaste renewed volcanic activity associated with the detonation of that nuclear war head, (1)

2 | triggering renewed violence in seismic activity in the Yucca Mountain region. I hate being pessimistic, but I am worried about this DOE plan.

The draft EIS is bad paper when it asks me to believe that the world is not an evil place full of sinners hell-bent on as much destruction as they (or should I say we?) can collectively wreak. I view the numbers of predicted dead over decades of work or mere physical proximity as wholly unrealistic. We can not predict the future with that amount of accuracy - if history of the past 100 years teaches us anything, it is that our species walks a perilous course fraught with danger. I appreciate the attempt to provide people with a secure path into the future, for the most part, regarding high level radioactive waste. I simply doubt the rosy glow on process that is projected in the draft EIS.

3... Let me prognosticate one more time. Mexico develops a desire to reclaim California. Invades. As the residents of L.A. and surrounding communities are fleeing as refugees, the battle front is pushed into Nevada north of Las Vegas. The artillery is dug in on Yucca Mountain. As the Mexican Army advances, their Air Force pounds the U.S. Artillery positions. Finally, they resort to a nuclear warhead to limit their losses to the U.S. ground forces fire. [How deep a crater will the 20 megaton warhead leave? Will it ignite further chain reactions from beneath the mountain?]

A more likely scenario might be a Russian warhead or a terrorist one. How realistic is it to project 100 years of institutional stability? The past 200 years do not inspire much confidence for survival without wars, plagues, and natural disasters, including unexpected earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. I suggest your draft EIS is overly optimistic, and perhaps written for middle class suburban consumption. I'm poorer than that, although coming from the same aspirations at some point in the past 40 years. I do not share the precise scientific ability to predict 38 years with 10 to the minus 7th power expectations, and if you are perfectly honest with yourself, neither do you.

3 | I'll write again when I have read more. Got to get this in the mail now. I saw Dan Rather's evening news about the U.S.-Russian nuclear arsenals, which prompted this in part. I'd like to see the EIS address the impact of a nuclear warhead on the repository. Given U.S., Russian, U.K., French, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, and Israeli nuclear warheads, it seems to be a prudent thought to consider.

Thanks for any further consideration and response.

Respectfully,

Charles Thomas Smit

P.S. I am non-violent in the extreme, as a follower of Christ, who, according to New Testament Gospel sources, killed no one. (2)