

FEB 01 2000

8 MR. CITTA: Good afternoon. My name is

9 Nick Citta, and I'm an Assistant Senior Business  
10 Manager for IBW Local 15. Local 15 appreciates  
11 the opportunity to present comments at this  
12 hearing.

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13 We strongly believe that safe nuclear  
14 energy is plainly vital to our country's energy  
15 mix, and without a repository for storing spent  
16 nuclear fuel, we run the risk of losing a needed  
17 energy source.

18 The nearly 9200 members of IBW Local  
19 15 include many workers at nuclear facilities.  
20 Overall, 2200 union employees work at long-term  
21 good paying jobs at the five nuclear power  
22 plants here in the State of Illinois.

23 Without a proper storage facility for  
24 their used nuclear fuel, these nuclear plants  
1 face the possibility of having to be shut down.  
2 If these plants start closing due to a lack of  
3 spent fuel storage space, many union jobs will  
4 disappear and consumers, for no compelling  
5 reason, will lose a real contender for low-cost  
6 electricity in the newly competitive market of  
7 the electric supply industry.

8 In addition to the 2200 permanent  
9 jobs, hundreds of additional union employees are  
10 hired during each refueling outage at the plants  
11 around the state. In order for these jobs to  
12 continue, it is obviously necessary that the

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13 nuclear plants continue to operate.

14           Even if one plant is forced to shut  
15 down because of lack of storage space, hundreds,  
16 possibly thousands of union jobs will be lost.  
17 It is clearly in this state's need to have a  
18 place to put the used nuclear fuel to assure  
19 continued operation of our nuclear power plants.

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20           Scientists have been studying Yucca  
21 Mountain for more than a decade. This mountain  
22 is the most extensively defined piece of  
23 property in the world. DOE's viability  
24 assessment, which was released last year, shows  
1 that based upon scientific studies of Yucca  
2 Mountain thus far, there are no reasons to  
3 continue on with the environmental impact  
4 statement process.

5           It clearly makes sense that we should  
6 store used fuel at one centralized storage  
7 facility. Fuel is currently stored at more than  
8 150 long-term storage facilities in 41 states.  
9 According to the draft EIS there is  
10 significantly more protection for the American  
11 public in the environment if we have one central  
12 federal repository.

13           We should not pass this problem on to  
14 our children and grandchildren, especially since  
15 science has proven that we can safely transport  
16 and store the fuel at Yucca Mountain.

17                   It is a fact that spent nuclear fuel  
18 being transported today is done safely. We have  
19 already had over 3,000 shipments of used nuclear  
20 fuel in our country. Of these 3,000 shipments  
21 only eight accidents have occurred, and no  
22 injuries or fatalities have occurred as a result  
23 of radiation leaks from the transportation  
24 containers.

1                   Our existing laws and regulations  
2 provide for the safe loading, packaging,  
3 transportation, unloading of all kinds of  
4 nuclear materials today. It has been proven  
5 that this type of cargo can be moved with the  
6 utmost safety. There is no reason to believe  
7 that the continued transportation of radioactive  
8 materials will be any less safe.

9                   Union workers are justifiably proud of  
10 their safe record in transporting radioactive  
11 cargo. The federal government has a legal  
12 obligation to manage and dispose of used fuel  
13 created by the nation's electric utilities. For  
14 17 years consumers of electricity, including  
15 union workers, have paid nearly \$16 million into  
16 a federal trust fund to pay for the disposal of  
17 used nuclear fuel. Only about 6 million of  
18 these dollars have been spent on the Yucca  
19 Mountain project. Utility customers paid this  
20 money to ensure that the government lives up to  
21 its responsibility and begins managing the used

22 nuclear fuel.

23                   The draft environmental impact  
24 statement with the extensive scientific study  
1 shows that Yucca Mountain is a suitable  
2 repository for used nuclear fuel. In addition,  
3 historically we have proven that we can safely  
4 transport radioactive cargos without harming  
5 American citizens or the environment.

6                   We must protect the many union jobs  
7 that depend on continued operation of our  
8 nuclear power plants. It just makes sense that  
9 we continue forward with Yucca Mountain as a  
10 repository for our nation's nuclear -- used  
11 nuclear fuel. There are many jobs at stake.

12                   Thank you.