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FEB 2 3 2000

Testimony Given by Alice Geary before the DOE at the **Hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement** for **a Proposed Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada.**
St. Louis, MO America's Center January 20, 2000 6:00 PM.

**EIS001657**

1 Radioactive waste is hazardous where it is now. Transporting it in vast quantities will increase the hazardousness many times over. Even if the technology existed for the safe disposal of radioactive waste, and a safe site were available, the transporting of the waste over hundreds of miles would be a dangerous proposition, involving potential massive exposure to radioactivity.

Nuclear power generation turns out to have been a technological solution to energy production that did not consider of the entire human biological and physiological context. Only the science of physics was properly respected. The dangers to human life and health associated with the generation of great quantities of waste were not adequately factored into the equations.

The dangers of radiation have been slow to dawn on both scientists and lay persons. For example, Marie Curie, the scientist who discovered radium, did not realize the extent of the danger to human bodies, even of her own. She died of cancer caused by her handling of this substance in her scientific explorations.

Most Americans first learned of nuclear power when this country exploded a nuclear bomb over a nation with whom we were at war. Little did we realize that this same radioactive force would be brought home into our midst after the war, in the utilization of the atom for electric power generation.

Electric companies promised that solutions would be found for safe disposal of the large quantities of radioactive waste resulting from power generation. When no solutions appeared, many resorted to denial of the harmful effects of radioactive waste. To date no adequately safe solutions have been devised. The wastes continue to give off harmful radiation for thousands or millions of years, while stored at the site of the power plants. They are contained, according to the best-known solutions, although imperfect, certainly not foolproof, with the **hope** that **nothing will go wrong**.

2 The current plans to move these radioactive wastes to an underground area in Nevada do not include a perfected technology for storage. In fact, storing 70,000 metric tons of high-level radioactive waste in a single location brings excalated risks to the new site, risks of greater volatility than the smaller amounts stored at various sites around the country. The plans are based not on a scientific advantage over the present arrangement, but above all on the **hope** that **nothing can go wrong**...**go wrong...go wrong...**

3 In St. Louis we are at the crossroads of truck and rail routes which will be utilized in the transport. The risks to all human life and health along these routes must be further considered. We know from Three Mile Island and Chernobyl that accidents do happen. Accidents of all kinds kind can involve exposure to radioactivity which is particularly harmful to children and pregnant women and their unborn children. The population of St. Louis could be exposed on the average to a shipment every other day for 30 years.

Measures being taken to prevent the dangers of increased exposure to the population of St. Louis are inadequate. Who has the right to decide that the cancers and birth defects or miscarriages from such exposure are acceptable risks? The hope that **nothing can go wrong...go wrong...go wrong**...is not enough.

We must speak up for the population of St. Louis, that of the State of Missouri, as well as the populations in 43 states along the transport routes, not to mention those living near the proposed new,
4 risky storage site. The wastes generated from nuclear power plants should be left where they are. Solutions for their safe storage, if found, can be applied on site. Nothing will be gained by moving fuel rods with the estimated equivalent radioactivity of 2 million atom bombs across 43 states.

We call upon our Congressmen and Senators to stop this dangerous transport on the railroads and highways across the heartland of America. The hope that nothing can go wrong is not a sufficient basis on which to risk our lives and our health.