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LOUIS BENEZET

MR. BENEZET: Thank you very much.

1 I'd like to pick up where I left off this afternoon, and I think what we heard from the last two speakers ties in pretty well with the last thing I was saying, which was that no additional radiation exposure is acceptable to downwinders.

2 What Kristen Thomas said also ties in with what Ian Zobarte was saying, and if you look in your EIS in section 4, I think, page 389, it talks about Native American viewpoints. It talks about how the Indians have a holistic attitude towards their environment and also how they feel that the contamination, nuclear contamination of the test site and the Yucca Mountain area represents a desecration of sacred lands. The DOE doesn't make any response to this statement. What are you going to do about it? What are you going to do about the desecration of sacred lands?

3 There are other people in Nevada, some of us who are not Native Americans, but we also feel the same way, that what's happened to us was a desecration. It was a contamination of our health and our environment in the past at the time of the testing. I first came here, came to Pioche, Nevada when I was 6 years old in 1954 when the testing was going on. I'm thought of as kind of a Johnny come lately in my community, but many of us, many of the people in my community go back generations, and what happened to them was a desecration.

We feel the same way about our State of Nevada. We're desert lovers. We -- we're here because this is the kind of country we want to live in. What happened out there, there may be nothing you can do about it except say a prayer, try to heal it. Try to make it holy again.

But there are those who -- who take a different point of view, who -- we've heard from a lot of them
4 tonight. Many of these people admit that they're the paid spokesman of the nuclear industry, groups like the study committee and so forth that all want to tell us that there's nothing we can do about it. This stuff's coming, anyway. The area's contaminated already. Therefore it's the best place for it. Is that the way you treat a desecrated sacred land? Add more on top of what you already have? I was talking about this problem addressed to my comments. This was in the context of some of the issues that were raised in the scoping hearings that the DEIS doesn't address.

5 Another whole area that they -- and some of the people have mentioned this -- is the lack of their concern about the various types of impacts that would happen to our communities through impacts on our society, on our economics. Many of these impacts related to perception of risks, stigmatization. I live out in a rural area where we have a fairly non -- a stagnant economy, you might say. They've been mining and there's a railroad in the past.

6... Back in about 1976, a new highway was built from Hiko up to Ely and it cut down and came through Caliente and Pioche and Panaca and the communities felt they were struggling. They try to do things to attract more visitors and get people to come out to the community. We're glad people from Las Vegas and California are discovering towns like Pioche and are moving up there and asking, "Gee, this would be a nice place to live. Is there any place up here where we can live?" We're starting to get more people coming through. I happen to work in the museum and show some of these visitors around.

The highway on which I live has been designated the Great Basin Highway. It provides access to the Great Basin National Park. This is one of the things that we pride ourselves on, and yet if Caliente is chosen, Highway 93 from Caliente to Hiko is going to be a nuclear waste haul route. What effect will that have on what we have accomplished over the last twenty years? That's the kind of thing that's not

6 cont. covered in your document, and I'm just speaking of my area, for example. You could probably say the same thing of Carlin and Mesquite and a lot of the other communities, Pahrump and the rest of them. I'm not saying don't put it in my backyard and put it in his. You've got to look at this kind of issue all the way down the line.

7 One item that struck me, I think it was in section 2, page 13, they're talking about the problems of closure of the repository. The DEIS, however, does not identify when this closure will take place. It can take place in fifty years; it can take place in 300 years. They say that the future generations will determine when exactly this closure will take place and carry it out. Then they go on to describe the closure process as a process that takes fifteen -- is it a fifteen-year process and obviously it would be quite expensive, but there's nothing in the DEIS to analyze the possible conditions that might affect the ability of future generations 300 years from now to carry out a fifteen-year project.

8 As I mentioned earlier, the Environmental Impact Statement is intended to support a decision on what the transportation corridors will be, but they mention that additional planning will have to be done, field surveys, consultation with local governments, analysis of the need to upgrade heavy-haul routes, engineering environmental studies, et cetera which will follow the determination of the -- what the corridor will be. This is the cart before the horse. We've already determined that the corridor is going through Caliente, but you haven't done the environmental studies, whether it's feasible to upgrade the roads, et cetera. You haven't consulted with the local governments. This is totally backwards. This is a large area of inadequacy in the document.

9 One example of the way in which important studies that have to be done now are postponed to a post decision, period comes in -- you find in appendix L in the document which covers flood planes and wetlands. This is a special concern to me because the routes, the rail routes through Caliente travel through Perennial Stream or along side, which is a tributary to the Colorado River area. The intermodal site that's proposed to be near Caliente is within a few feet of the Meadow Valley Wash, and the document claims that this is in a 500-year floodplain.

10 I personally believe they haven't analyzed the flood conditions in this, because the history of the region is full of disastrous floods that wiped out the railroad and so forth in the past, but they say that in the event that this becomes -- this area is chosen as the rail corridor, they will then perform the wetland assessment and identify the mitigation measures. Again, this is totally backwards. These things have to be totally analyzed before you can have a document that can be used as a decision-making document to decide whether or not that corridor will be selected.

11 There is a lot of detail missing. I can say just for my own area in Lincoln County as far as identifying the affected environment, and since you can't identify the affected environment, it is very important hard to identify the impacts to that environment. I mentioned the lack of information regarding the surface water conditions, the environmental area that would be affected around Caliente. I don't believe the document even mentions that the Meadow Valley Wash is a perpetual tributary to the Colorado river.

12 I mentioned earlier today the lack of reference to the security needs that would be required in the canyon there where you have cliffs overlooking the intermodal -- potential intermodal site, and what kind of security needs would be required there. Would people be able to wander on those cliffs?

13... Ryan Park is not sufficiently identified as a resource. It's within a half a mile of the proposed intermodal facility. This is one of our state parks in Lincoln County where people go for the scenery. Of course the facility's known, Rainbow Canyon and the name speaks for itself. It's a scenic area. The EIS simply says that it's a BLM Class 3 area or something and leave it at that. Well, a BLM visual impact categories are

13 cont. absolutely meaningless to the people that live in this area, where it's an aesthetic resource and a recreation resource that has deep significance for the community.