

3819 Devonshire Ave
Kalamazoo MI 49006-2703
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Dr. Jane Summerson, EIS Document Manager
M/S 010
U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
P.O. Box 30307
North Las Vegas NV 89036-0307

RECEIVED

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Dear Dr. Summerson,

This letter is my response to the "**Supplement to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Yucca Mountain**", which was mailed to me. I appreciate the extension of the comment period to July 6, 2001.

I have read through the document, with its description of the drift tunnels, waste package units, waste package emplacement pallets, titanium drip shields, forced air ventilation, the extended period of natural ventilation, and the accompanying support facilities. These remain as busy work activities that ignore the total picture of the permanent disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste at the Yucca Mountain site.

1 | In the first place, the U.S. government has a terrible record in all of the years of exposing the public to radioactive materials through uranium mining, atomic bomb testing, depleted uranium munitions, and for years now through exposure to atomic power plants radioactive releases. Now the government wants us to believe that it can safely move and store military, commercial and foreign nuclear waste in a gigantic burial ground near Las Vegas at Yucca Mountain.

2 | Thousands of shipments will be made to the Yucca Mountain site, passing through 43 states, providing a nightmare of potential accidents, economic catastrophe and terrorism. One engineer commented, "How would you like to build something that had to be 99.99999% perfect forever?"

What are the problems with the site and the shipments of nuclear materials to this place?

(1) There are 33 known geological faults near Yucca Mountain. About 600 seismic events have occurred near the site in the last 20 years alone, including a 5.6-magnitude earthquake in 1992.

(2) The Yucca shipping campaign would be the largest nuclear materials transport in history, consisting of some 80,000 shipments in 24 years. The federal government predicts 70 to 310 nuclear transportation accidents over the next 75 years.

3... | (3) Rail (88%) and truck (12%) will transport the waste. Union Pacific is the largest rail company in America and will handle most of the work. Their track record is not encouraging.

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3 cont. Derailments and other problems have become epidemic. The U.S. military stopped using Union Pacific because of delays and security problems. The Association of American Railroads has said that today's rail lines, in Idaho and elsewhere, cannot handle the weight of nuclear casks, and that the casks themselves may not withstand an accident. The railroads cannot afford to carry casks at the slow speed the federal government requires.

4 (4) The Yucca Mountain high-level waste repository is supposed to safely dispose of 77,000 tons of deadly radioactive waste. The current design is almost entirely reliant upon manmade, "engineered barriers" because the mountain itself will not contain the waste. This design further demonstrates the site's problems and is contrary to the fundamental premise of federal law that the site alone provide primary natural waste isolation.

(5) A former Department of Energy official, W. Kenneth Davis, who drafted a proposal to make Nevada's Yucca Mountain a nuclear waste disposal site, is withdrawing his support for the project. He sent an unsolicited letter to the White House saying that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission won't approve the site.

In his three-page memorandum, Davis stated: "In my opinion (it) should be put in mothballs." Davis cited the potential for water and radiation to escape Yucca Mountain, and said that burying nuclear wastes in a permanent repository was never intended when he authored the policy. Davis added that Yucca Mountain can't overcome Nevada's strong opposition to transporting and storing the waste 1,000 feet beneath a wind-swept ridge, 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas.

5 (6) The EPA recently issued its final radiation exposure standard for Nevada's Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository. The standard sets a dose limit for exposure of no more than 15 millirem per year from all pathways and a groundwater standard of 4 millirem per year, the same level used in the Safe Water Act. The EPA notes that an aquifer beneath the planned repository will likely serve nearby Las Vegas in the 10,000-plus years that the repository's spent nuclear fuel remains dangerous.

6 A recent report notes that "surprise discoveries" at DOE sites have found that radionuclides in soil and groundwater are moving fourfold faster than models had predicted, which drastically changes the assumption about how quickly waste may contaminate an aquifer at Yucca Mountain.

I am opposed to the continued work on the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste storage site and believe that the project should be terminated.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Anderson

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