

September 2, 2001

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Dear Ms. Hanlon:

I am writing this letter to supply my comments to you and the Department of Energy because I will be unable to attend any of the upcoming public hearings on the possible recommendation of Yucca Mountain as a site for spent nuclear waste.

I am opposed to Yucca Mountain as a storage site for several reasons.

I was interested to recently view the DOE website. I found the "Why Yucca Mountain?" section of the site to be particularly intriguing. The first answer to the question of "Why Yucca Mountain?" was because of "its remote location and long distance from a large population center--100 miles from Las Vegas, Nevada." Are you joking? Less than 100 miles from the fastest growing population center in the entire country? Over one million people currently live less than 90 miles from Yucca Mountain and over 43 million people visit here every year. This is remote? If a basic fact like the location of the mountain is not described accurately, is there any reason to believe the scientific statements and conclusions?

Since over 80% of the nuclear waste is generated east of the Mississippi River, the transportation of nuclear waste is a critical issue. One however that has yet to be addressed. The transportation routes between Yucca Mountain and the 77 sites (all outside Nevada) have the potential of impacting an additional 50 million people. How will their safety and public health be addressed? One accident will be enough to devastate an enormous part of our country.

Locally, Highway 95, that traverses both the Boulder Dam and Interstate 15, is one of the busiest highways in the country. Transporting waste over the Dam (2 lanes) or through the intersection of I-15 and Highway 95, affectionately called the "Spaghetti Bowl" is a dangerous proposition. A review of just the past years' statistics will show several semi trucks that have fallen off the Spaghetti Bowl fly-overs. This intersection is immediately adjacent to downtown Las Vegas. Once again, hardly a remote location.

However, since the routes have not been identified or publicized, neither we in Nevada, nor millions of other citizens across the country, are truly able to respond to this aspect of the storage situation. The only comment that the DOE's Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste makes on this issue is, "These impacts would include some traffic fatalities and the potential for low radiological doses to members of the public from the routine transportation of the spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste." I guess the citizenry is dispensable.

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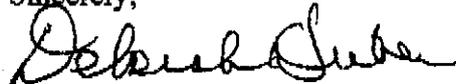
I also do not believe that the "no action" alternative has been adequately outlined or investigated. In addition, since Yucca Mountain is the only site being evaluated, how can we be sure that this is the "best" site for the repository?

I also have concerns about the number of earthquakes and volcanic activity that we have here in the dessert. Within the last few years, we have had numerous earthquakes strong enough to rattle the dishes and awaken us from sleep. I strongly believe that this kind of activity would definitely affect the storage area. In addition, the statement from the report that "most" of the wastes are not "very" soluble in the "expected" conditions doesn't sound like a very "scientific" statement of assurance to me.

Although the Administration touts "science" as the reason for Yucca Mountain being chosen as the storage site, it is clear that years of politics is truly the reason for its selection. It appears that Nevada, while one of the very few states that has no active nuclear or research sites, is an easy target with only 4 congressional representatives to fight this action.

The economic, environmental, and health impact on millions of people is not adequately addressed by either the recent Site Suitability or the Science and Engineering Reports. I urge you not to recommend Yucca Mountain as a temporary or permanent site for nuclear waste storage. Thank you.

Sincerely,



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cc: Senator Harry Reid
Senator John Ensign
Congresswoman Shelly Berkley