

550491

RECEIVED

September 5, 2001

SEP 14 2001

Dear Ms. Hanlon,

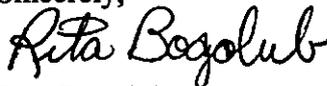
I am deeply concerned over the Yucca Mountain Project and the flawed process railroading it toward approval. Despite major scientific uncertainties and widespread public opposition, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is rushing to develop a high-level nuclear waste dump at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. The DOE recently gave Las Vegas residents only nine business days notice of a crucial public hearing on the Secretary of Energy's intention to recommend the nuclear waste dump plan to the President.

Yucca Mountain, located 80 miles northwest of Las Vegas, is on disputed territory claimed by the Western Shoshone Nation under the Ruby Valley Treaty of 1863, but currently held by the DOE. An aquifer beneath the site is the only source of drinking water for the closest community. Seismic activity in the area makes it likely that radioactivity from the proposed repository would eventually contaminate the groundwater and surrounding environment.

Moreover, 70,000 metric tons of high-level radioactive waste from commercial nuclear reactors and DOE weapons sites across the country would be shipped to the proposed dump, launching an unprecedented nuclear transportation scheme. Routing projections indicate that radioactive Yucca Mountain shipments would likely pass within half a mile of the homes, schools and workplaces of 50 million Americans in 43 states by truck and train. A high proportion of these shipments would pass through Illinois because of our central location. The DOE's own estimates suggest that at least 50 accidents could occur during shipment of radioactive waste. There will be accidents, there will be leaks and hot spots, people will be affected, with little recourse to insurance. Nuclear waste transportation containers have not been fully physically tested, but tested primarily by computer simulation. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has contracted with Sandia National Labs to conduct a new study which will not be completed until 2003.

How can the Secretary of Energy be preparing to recommend Yucca Mountain for a high-level nuclear waste dump when thousands of public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement still have not been addressed? Without a Final Environmental Impact Statement, a detailed transportation scenario, finalized Siting Guidelines, or a licensing rule, the Department of Energy lacks the basis for consideration of site suitability. The public cannot have confidence in any recommendation that arises from such a dramatically flawed process. I urge you to abandon the Yucca Mountain Project.

Sincerely,



Rita Bogolub
2338 Scoville
Berwyn, Illinois 60402
708-788-6726