

September 8, 2001

RECEIVED

550510

SEP 14 2001

Carol Hanlon
U.S. Department of Energy
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
P.O. Box 30307
North Las Vegas, Nevada 89036—0307

To whom it may concern and Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham;

I am a physician who has lived in Nevada since 1991. I've followed this Yucca Mountain issue since I lived in Reno (I now live in Summerlin, in the Las Vegas area). I have a family with two young children. I do not want high level nuclear waste shipped to and stored at Yucca Mountain and I do not want my children's lives placed in danger. As a physician, I am well aware that no scientific study or endeavor is infallible (as example the Challenger explosion). The great majority of people in Nevada also do not want Nevada to be the nation's nuclear waste dump. Why then, are the Bush Administration and the Energy Department trying to force this dump upon us? Is it because no other state wants it either, and the government feels people in Nevada are expendable. Obviously, that is what is the motivation for this project.

While working in Nevada as a physician, I've had the opportunity to speak with many native Nevadans about their lives. I have spoken with several men who told me they worked in the nuclear industry in the past and were now suffering from chronic health problems which they attributed to their exposure to radiation on the job. One man had severe peripheral vascular disease and radiation burns to his legs. Another had end stage lung disease and said he had never been a smoker. Not one of these men said they accepted their health problems because they knew what they were getting into when they accepted their jobs. These men were all bitter about their health problems and they blamed the government and said the government had lied to them. I've had people tell me how cancer had taken many of their family members lives and told me how the government had invited them to watch the mushroom cloud of the nuclear tests that were carried out years ago as if it was a fourth of July fireworks display and they were told it was all perfectly safe.

I am furious that the current government now wants to victimize my family and my children in the same way it has victimized Nevadans in the past. There are many reasons why the nuclear waste dump will not be safe. Trucking in nuclear waste is an obvious risk because of the risk of automobile accidents which happen frequently on our roads, and the risk of terrorism, floods, and earthquakes. The proposed route to truck in this poisonous stuff encircles our home. I've read that there will be several nuclear waste trucks driving by our home daily for several years. Our lives will be at tremendous risk at all this time. Not only will this ruin our property values and destroy our businesses in Southern Nevada, it will devastate us psychologically to be under constant threat of a

nuclear accident. And this is if everything goes well. What if the unthinkable happens and our community suffers a nuclear accident? Would we survive it? If we did survive it would my children eventually die young of leukemia? Would my family be compensated if a nuclear accident occurred? I understand there is a federal law that would deny compensation to nuclear accident victims. There is no amount of money that could ever compensate my family for these losses.

I do not believe that storage of high level nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain will ever be safe despite the reports. The Mohave Desert is an extremely harsh climate. There is nothing that man can build that will stand up to this climate for very long unless it is made out of rock and even the rock formations here are in flux. This state is one of the three top states in our country for earthquakes and I've experienced a few since I've been in Nevada. Any type of metal will be susceptible to water and mineral salt damage. I believe there is ground water near the Yucca Mountain site which will eventually invade it. My own home, which is less than 10 years old, has already suffered severe water damage. The extreme heat eventually causes everything to fall apart. The nuclear waste will long outlive any container devised to store it (250,000 years). This part of the environment is extremely fragile and easily disrupted since there is very little top soil. The oldest living thing on earth, a bristlecone pine tree is found in this part of the world. I believe the area will eventually be severely contaminated with radiation from the dump, and one of the last beautiful and wild areas in our country will be devastated. I also believe the effects of this devastation will not be felt in Nevada alone, but also in Southern California and in Arizona, which depend on water from the Colorado River. The land that the Shoshone people believe belongs to them (rather than the federal government) will be destroyed.

Nevada is not a wasteland and should not be destroyed. You have to live here to realize how beautiful this land is. The people of Nevada are good people and the vast majority of us do not visit the strip any more often than the visitors to Nevada do, and probably a lot less. Our constitutional rights are being violated by this dump. I was not able to attend the public hearing concerning the dump because no prior notice was given and I could not take my young children with me to a meeting so far away. Obviously the D.O.E. planned it that way (illegally) and the Secretary of Energy did not even have the decency to come to the meeting. The people of Mexico are apparently much more deserving of his time than we lowly Nevadans. I went to school in Michigan and I understand Mr. Abraham is also from Michigan. I still consider myself a Michigander and part of my family still lives in Michigan. My father was an executive in the automobile industry. I meet people who have moved from Michigan to Nevada frequently. It is not right for the constitutional rights of the people of Nevada to be denied just because we are in the minority. I do not think the people of other states like Michigan would want Nevada to be treated so unfairly if they knew what was really going on, no matter how much they want the nuclear waste removed from their states. If the Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham recommends Yucca Mountain as the Nation's nuclear waste dump as President Bush intends for him to do, I think he will be a big disgrace to the people of Michigan. It's obvious President Bush appointed him to

rubber stamp everything in his energy policy, and now he is touting his energy policy as the answer to the terrible economy he is helping to create.

There is a better solution. We should pay attention to what other countries (who are smarter than we) are doing with their nuclear waste. We could try to recycle it, to reduce the danger, or we could store it above ground where it currently is located until scientists devise better ways of recycling it. Storage above ground would be better because the containers could be monitored more closely to protect against wear and tear.

It is too dangerous to concentrate all that deadly nuclear waste next to one city, especially Las Vegas which has the fastest growing school district in the country. It is criminal to endanger so many children's lives. The people on the radio talk shows who say Nevada could someday benefit from nuclear waste storage must be paid by the nuclear industry to say that. I've heard that helium from the moon could be used to create nuclear power with no waste someday. If nuclear waste were to be stored in Nevada it would always be a liability to Nevada. We did not produce the nuclear waste and therefore it is not our obligation to store it. President Bush thinks the way to deal with nuclear waste is to keep it out of sight out of mind, but it won't be out of sight or mind for Nevadans, and we won't let you do this to our state.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Malleck M.D.



9436 Hershey Lane
Las Vegas, Nevada 89134