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Carol Hanlon
US Department of Energy; Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office (M/S #025)
PO Box 30307
North Las Vegas NV 89036-0307

October 4, 2001

Dear Carol,

I am writing this letter to voice my concern and opposition to the proposed nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain. With all due respect to the D.O.E. and the prevailing will of the Congress, the Yucca Mountain plan has numerous fatal flaws and should be abandoned. Many of these flaws are in direct conflict with Congressional Findings, and common sense. Two big ones are:

- Yucca Mountain is geologically ill suited for the nuclear waste repository.
- Transporting the vast quantities of the most dangerous and toxic substances known to man exposes the entire county to unacceptable risk.

The geology of the Yucca mountain site is not stable enough for the millions of years necessary for the waste to decay. The area is close to several known and active fault lines. Earthquakes in the region are common. The region was shaped by volcanic activity. Is there no risk of future volcanic activity for the next several millennia? These facts are well known and documented in government reports made by the DOE, GAO, and the State of Nevada.

Perhaps the greatest threat to long and short term nuclear storage is water. There is recent evidence that the water table at the site has fluctuated to a much larger degree than is considered acceptable for such a use. This information is also in the record.

These concerns are well known to the D.O.E. and have not been adequately addressed. The proposed technology is inadequate and violates the spirit if not the letter of the Congressional Findings #1, #6, and #7 listed below.

Congressional Findings

Section 111(a) of the NWPA (42 U.S.C. 10131(a)) contains seven Congressional findings for the repository program:

(1)	Radioactive waste creates potential risks and <u>requires safe and environmentally acceptable methods of disposal;</u>
(2)	A national problem has been created by the accumulation of (A) spent nuclear fuel ...; and (B) radioactive waste ...
(3)	Federal efforts during the past 30 years to devise a permanent solution ... have not been adequate;
(4)	While the Federal government has the responsibility to provide for ... permanent disposal ... , the costs ... should be the responsibility of the generators and owners...
(5)	The generators and owners of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel ... have the primary responsibility to provide for, and ... pay the costs of, the interim storage of such waste and spent fuel until ... accepted by the Secretary of Energy ...
(6)	State and public participation ... is essential in order to promote <u>public confidence in the safety of disposal ...</u>
(7)	High-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel have become major subjects of public concern, and <u>appropriate precautions must be taken to ensure that [they] do not adversely affect public health and safety or the environment for this or future generations.</u>

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Instead we have the D.O.E. record of making the same promises, denials, and deceptions that led to the on going ecological disaster at Hanford, Washington (i.e. built to last 10,000 years, but did not last 50). These are problems we know about, what of the unforeseen ones? It does not make them less real. We are not prepared for the time line this material requires to become safe. As you dig the deep holes remember there are sea fossils in the rock atop Mt. Everest. Coal in deep mines in Appalachia were once plants on the surface. The Appalachian range, now mere foot hills by present comparison, was once higher than the Himalayan range. One thing is certain; things change, sometimes in dramatic ways.

If Yucca Mountain's physical flaws are not of high enough concern, what of the problems of transporting the waste to Nevada? The path to Yucca is strewn with horrendous potential hazards, not to discount the more common problems of train derailments, collisions, out of control chemical fires, and highway accidents. They are very real. Terrorism and/or attack from rogue nation states are a clear and present danger. In light of the tragic events of September 11, 2001 is transporting the enormous quantity of dangerous material over the entire country for the next 30 years prudent?

While we prepare to dump untold money and human resources to develop a missile defense system and undermine the ABM treaty, we are dumping vast sums of money and human resources to turn the belly of our country into a carnival shooting gallery for our enemies! The "robust" containers will parade across our nations population centers, farm land and water supply like tin ducks at the county fair shooting gallery. At my last briefing by the DOE as to security it was mentioned that a couple of armed guards MAY, but not necessarily, accompany the " robust containers" enroute to Nevada. A modern day Jesse James would have an easy time becoming a nuclear power. The way of asymmetrical warfare is to use a greater power's assets against itself. Granted the transport containers are robust, but so was the World Trade Center that was built to withstand the impact of a Boeing 727. The terrorists just used a bigger and well-placed jet. The Pentagon was built to take an air assault and the section hit was recently reinforced. It did not do much better. One shipment every other day through St. Louis for the next 30 years makes an easy target, not to mention the vulnerability of the rest of our great country. We have no evacuation plan in case of an accident along the proposed highways and rail lines. How do you quickly and safely remove a large population when the access routes are contaminated? Terrorists have repeatedly proven their creativity, ability and resolve. Their method of operation is low cost and low tech. Imagine a city or the mighty Mississippi River basin radioactive for the next few million years. Imagine several cities simultaneously irradiated. This is how our enemy thinks.

I beg of you to reconsider this folly.

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