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June 1, 2004

TO:  
EIS Document Manager Robin Sweeney, Office of Civilian Radioactive  
Waste Management, U.S. Department of Energy

Dear EIS Document Manager Robin Sweeney:

Re: Scope of Environmental Impact Statement for Alignment,  
Construction, and Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at  
Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV [69 FR 68: 18565-18569]

My thoughts and concerns about the scope of the Environmental Impact  
Statement (EIS) are as follows:

First, picking a specific rail corridor for transporting high-level  
nuclear waste to the proposed Yucca Mountain repository within the  
state of Nevada will have implications for route selection across the  
country. The scope of the EIS should be broadened to include national  
effects, and the comment period extended further to allow ample time  
for affected communities to fully analyze the potential impacts.

In keeping with the need for a comprehensive national focus on  
transportation, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) should schedule  
public hearings along other major transportation routes that will be  
heavily impacted by the selection of the Caliente Corridor at locations  
around the country, not just in Nevada. Transportation is a national  
issue, and citizens around the country deserve the chance to ask  
questions and offer input on the record in a public setting.

Second, when evaluating the environmental impact of the proposed rail  
spur, DOE must include the whole of the surrounding environment in the  
scope of its analysis. This means that the proximity of many of those  
affected by the rail spur to the Nevada Test Site (NTS) should be taken  
into account; these are citizens who have been exposed to more than  
their fair share of radiation and the effects of government  
experiments. The EIS should incorporate a comprehensive analysis of the  
cumulative effects radiation has had and will have on the surrounding

population.

Third, DOE should include in its analysis the potential effects construction and operation of the rail spur will have on current land use and environmental attributes. This includes effects on ranchers and other property owners/users, surrounding plant and animal species (including endangered and protected species), the desert ecosystem (including soil health), water quality and availability, air quality, and the visual impact.

