



Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste

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Comment Sheet

EIS000410

Name: THOMAS W. COX Organization: LIS Citizen

Mailing Address: PO Box 7461 Reno, NV 89570

Zip:

Telephone number (optional): (775) 741-2812

How did you hear about us?

Newspaper ad [] Public meetings [] Other: KOH RADIO

Neighbor [] Exactly how many nuclear tests were conducted, both above and below ground, and their exact proximity to population and water

If you want to be on our mailing list to receive information about the Environmental Impact Statement or site characterization, check here. []

2. The depth of underground tests, and how they have already affected the water table

3. Quantify the radiation which exists there now, both above and below ground, its potential life expectancy, comparing it to the proposed waste dump.

4. Conditions which exist from the testing which would affect workers at the project

5. A complete public airing of all information concerning the detonations at the site, including any information considered classified by the military, insofar as radioactive contamination is concerned - I do not believe the military or DOE has the right to keep that sort of information secret.

Please enter my letter into your record

Thomas W. Cox

Please note: For your comment(s) to be considered in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, your comment(s) need to be received by the Department of Energy by February 9, 2000. To the extent practicable the Department will consider comments received after February 9.

Please feel free to attach additional pages; more postage may be needed. If you prefer to mail your comments, you may use the back side of this sheet as a postage-paid, self-mailer. To do so, fold in thirds along the dotted line so address and postage-paid notice are visible; then secure with tape.

December 4, 1999

Wendy Dixon, EIS Manager

Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
U.S. Department of Energy M/S 010
P.O. Box 30307
North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

Dear Ms Dixon:

I have been following the Yucca Mountain Project with great interest for many years and have found that articles (via D.O.E.) in local newspapers as well as radio and television regarding this issue either miss or intentionally bury a crucial point.

I grew up in Tonopah, Nevada just on the Northern fringe of the A.E.C. test site from 1947 to 1958, and spent a considerable amount of time there until 1965, and would like to relate my own experiences and concerns. I witnessed at least 20 above-ground nuclear explosions during that time, having been bussed by the Nye County School District on "field trips" on several occasions - one every school year for several years. I was one of the "lucky" ones who saw the initial blast and fireball, since my father, being in the trucking business, provided my brother, sisters and myself with welding goggles. The other kids were told to turn their backs during the blast.

In addition to the school trips, we went to see several blasts on our own, just for an outing with our parents or our friends. On one memorable occasion, I was travelling in a truck with my dad somewhere near the test site when we were stopped at a road block by a deputy accompanied by military personnel until a blast went off. Apparently, we were too close to ground zero to go any farther. That blast was huge, rocked the truck violently, and turned the early-morning gray sky white, then orange, then black - and turned the frost on the sagebrush to liquid in an instant.

For the entire time we lived in Tonopah, we thought three and four yolked eggs were normal, and found two-headed lizards and snakes around our house. Several of my friends' fathers bought geiger counters and went into the desert staking claims for what they thought was uranium, but was in fact fallout from the nuclear blasts - the "fools gold" of the fifties.

On another occasion a cattle truck came onto our property (we lived in a company house on our father's trucking property) and the driver came to the house asking for help. He was hauling cattle from a ranch near the test site to

the processing plant in Yerington, and told my father that some of them were so sick from radiation that they could not stand up, and were getting trampled to death by the other cattle. Some of them were missing huge hunks of their hide - the driver explained that when they rounded them up, they were sick, lying in the fields in radioactive dust, and when forced to their feet their hide just stayed on the ground. The driver told my dad that his boss told him to get them to market as fast as he could, saying "I can't sell them if they're dead." I also remember them dragging a couple dead ones to the rear of the trailer so the driver could dispose of them in the desert on the way to market.

I was sick for several years after we moved to Reno. I had a horrible cough which lasted from about age ten through high school - diminishing in my twenties. Every day, I coughed until I vomited - and was told by one doctor that he thought I had tuberculosis. I could not participate in sports or even P.E., and enrolled in ROTC in high school just so I could avoid running or other exercise which would make me cough. I remembered another kid in Tonopah who was diagnosed with tuberculosis, so we figured that it was going around.

About ten years ago, while filling out paperwork to see a new doctor for a physical exam, I checked the "yes" box asking if I had ever had tuberculosis. After the exam, the doctor told me that I did not test positive for tuberculosis, explaining that if I in fact had the disease, that I would test positive for life. I read sometime later that a cough of that type was a symptom of illness caused by radiation. Having been relatively healthy for most of my adult life, I never thought much about the radiation I was exposed to over most of my childhood or related it to the cough until I read that article.

I relate these experiences only to demonstrate my first-hand knowledge of what went on at the A.E.C. test site during the fifties and sixties. In about 1963, President Kennedy signed the Atmospheric Test Ban Treaty in order to contain the radioactive fallout, wherein lies the actual point of this letter - the radiation which is contained at the site.

I do not believe that a reasonable conclusion can be drawn from a study which does not include a comparison study of the radiation which already exists. While I am no physicist, It would be hard to convince me that the radiation from over 110 above-ground tests and 1,100 underground tests (+/- a few hundred) set off in shafts which were 5,000 to 15,000 feet deep over a period of 30 years has not already contaminated the ground and the water in unimaginable proportions for miles around.

I believe that the following questions need to be answered before your department can come to a reasonable conclusion - and inform the public of what already exists at Yucca Mountain and the surrounding area:

1 (continued
on page 4)

1. *Exactly how many nuclear tests were conducted, both above and below ground, and their exact proximity to population and water*
2. *The depth of underground tests, and how they have already affected the water table*
3. *Quantify the radiation which exists there now, both above and below ground, its potential life expectancy, comparing it to the proposed waste dump.*
4. *Conditions which exist from the testing which would affect workers at the project*
5. *A complete public airing of all information concerning the detonations at the site, including any information considered classified by the military, insofar as radioactive contamination is concerned - I do not believe the military or DOE has the right to keep that sort of information secret.*

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It seems that this study is being conducted as if Yucca Mountain were virgin ground, when in fact it is probably the most contaminated place on Earth, and may be the only reasonable place to store nuclear waste.

We need to know...

Sincerely,



Thomas W. Cox
PO Box 7461
Reno, NV 89510-7461

Phone: 775-741-2812