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To Whom It May Concern:

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I am Erika Blank from Pullman, Washington and I am very concerned with the idea of the Yucca Mountain being a storage site for all nuclear waste as this site is far from what I would consider a "safe" place to store this waste. There is no way to monitor it, there are many potential environmental impacts and the region in which this site is located has many geographical problems. I hope for the sake of our environment and future generations that you will please reconsider this site as the storage unit for all nuclear waste.

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My first concern with this site is that this is an area of great seismic activity. There are over thirty-five active fault lines, some going directly through this area, and there have been over 600 earthquakes with a magnitude greater than 2.5 on the Richter scale with in a fifty mile radius of the site in the past twenty years. This area is heavily fractured due to these faults and this will allow for dangerous gasses and the contamination of water sources. If a major jolt in the early 90's knocked the windows out of the DOE facility then what do you think it could do to the storage area of the waste? And furthermore the effects on residents of that area and the environment?

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This site is also suppose to be feasible for the entire span of time that the nuclear material is hazardous, that would be about 250,000 years! This site has no potential to store this amount of material, or any amount of material for that long, there are far too many risks. If current storage practices of nuclear waste can not contain it with out leaking for more than fifty years how are these supposedly "corrosion-resistant" metal containers going to last for 250,000 years with absolutely no leaking. They will not even be monitored in Yucca Mountain, that's absurd! At least with current practices we can monitor the waste and if there is a leak then we can put the waste into a new container to temporarily fix the situation. What, do you think if the waste it more or less hidden away in a mountain it just goes away because it is not visible? This is just setting us up for a gigantic catastrophe and large scale environmental and health problems.

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A third problem with the Yucca Mountain Project that bothers me is the transportation process. Thousands of metric tons of radioactive waste will be transported

3 cont.

by train and on highways through 43 states with in as close as a half a mile to millions of people in casks that have not been fully or safety tested. This is definitely not a good idea. If this waste spills there will be large-scale contamination that will be expensive and time consuming to clean up. Not to mention detrimental to the people who live in the areas that these casks are to be transported through. Do you remember how Chernobyl was to the people of that region when they had their accident? I am originally from Kelso, Washington and I live right next to the railroad tracks there and I definitely do not want highly radioactive waste to be transported in front of my back door and especially of there is a possibility for as you say an “insignificant” accident.

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Another problem with this project is the information provided or shall I say not provided. In your environmental impact statement you failed to provide some important information on the surrounding areas of Yucca Mountain. Last time I checked an environmental impact statement is suppose to include all potential effects of the designated area for the site. If this is true than why did you fail to mention the impact the Yucca Mountain Site will have on the dairy farm near by? The milk products coming from this farm, if contaminated, will not only effect the people of that area but also all the people who receive their milk from that region. You have also disrespected, to put it lightly, the Western Shoshone People in order to gain this land which is rightfully theirs.

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Not to mention that every time that something with this project does not meet the guidelines amazingly enough the guidelines seem to change to fit the Yucca Mountain Project. If the rules keep changing how can this place actually be considered “safe” for thousands of years?

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I believe that you need to stop and take a look at the big picture. Stopping or reducing the production of nuclear waste in the first place can prevent this. Nuclear power is such a small contribution to our overall power usage, I believe it is right around 8% of total power production in the entire United States. There are so many other “clean” sources of energy that can be taken into consideration instead of the use of nuclear power.

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I also believe that until we have the technology to create a storage unit, in a much better geographical location, that can hold the nuclear waste for thousands of years that current practices will have to do. At least with current practices we can monitor them. It is clear that the Yucca Mountain Project is not able to geologically isolate the radioactive waste,

8 cont. it will only delay the environmental exposures of these wastes. I also wish that you  
9 would hold more public hearings about this storage site. I find it rather sad that I had no  
idea that you were planning to do this until I learned about the project in a class at  
Washington State University, where I attend. If this is considered such a perfect site why  
the heck isn't it more widely known about?

Sincerely,

*Erika L. Blank*

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