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24 MR. MAGAVERN: Burying highly irradiated
25 nuclear fuel at Yucca Mountain would be a massive public
1 works project that would leave a toxic legacy for hundreds
2 of thousands of years. The extremely hazardous and
3 long-lived nature of the waste to be buried necessitates
4 the strictest and most searching environmental review.

1 | 5 Legally, NEPA requires an examination of the
6 environmental consequences of the proposed action and of
7 alternatives. The history of nuclear weapons and nuclear
8 power in the United States is full of secrecy, coverups
9 and outright lies, from the promise that nuclear power
10 would be safe and too cheap to meter, to the hushing up of
11 the dangers of radiation fallout from atmospheric bomb
12 tests. Given that history, the DOE needs to be especially
13 careful to be completely honest and open with the American
14 people about the health and safety effects of the proposed
15 repository.

16 Unfortunately, the document prepared by the
17 DOE falls well short of that standard. The State of
18 Nevada, the 50 million people living near nuclear waste
19 transportation routes and all the American people
20 concerned about contamination of water, food, air and land
21 deserve a more honest and informative statement of the
22 risks involved before such a massive radioactive waste
23 transportation and burial project should be contemplated.

2 | 24 The no action alternative is not credible.
25 The alternative discussed in the DEIS is so far-fetched as
1 to be unreasonable and completely valueless as a point of
2 comparison with its proposed action.

3 The DEIS correctly recognizes that neither of
4 the no action scenarios presented are likely. Such
5 far-fetched scenarios present no useful base line for
6 comparison. Indeed, they appear to have been chosen
7 precisely because they make the proposed action, moving
8 the waste to Yucca Mountain, look more desirable.

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9 The DEIS does not acknowledge the lethal
10 nature of the waste and fails to provide sufficient
11 information on the radiological characteristics of highly
12 irradiated nuclear fuel. An adequate environmental review
13 of the proposed repository program must absolutely address
14 the deadly nature of the waste to be shipped and buried.
15 Yet DOE barely touches on the radiological risks imposed
16 by highly irradiated nuclear fuel.

17 Information on the total activity and curies
18 and the surface dose rate in rems per hour of the
19 assemblies of irradiated fuel is essential for the
20 assessment of risk proposed by the transportation and
21 burial of radioactive waste. Yet DOE does not provide
22 such data.

23 For example, one unshielded assembly of the
24 sort to be buried at Yucca Mountain would have enough
25 radiation to give a person standing next to it a dose of
1 at least 100 rem per minute, meaning that with 10 minutes'
2 exposure, the person would almost certainly be doomed to
3 death within two months. This would be a rather quick but
4 certainly not painless death.

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5 The DEIS does not sufficiently describe the

6 impacts of transporting radioactive waste to Yucca
7 Mountain. The proposed action would require a massive
8 nuclear waste transportation program without precedent.
9 Highly irradiated nuclear fuel would have to travel by
10 train and truck through 43 states past homes, schools and
11 work places. An estimated 50 million Americans live near
12 the likely transportation rights.

13 The DEIS should map the specific routes and
14 analyze potential impacts of the shipping campaign. But
15 this DEIS does not tell the American people where the
16 waste will travel, nor does it tell local emergency
17 responders what training and equipment they will need to
18 respond in the event of an accident.

5 19 The DEIS also fails to address the potential
20 loss in property value to communities along the
21 transportation routes.

6 22 And the DEIS does not adequately address
23 environmental justice concerns. The DOE notes that Native
24 American tribes in the region consider the intrusive
25 nature of the repository and continuation of restrictions
1 on access to lands where the repository would be located
2 to have an adverse impact on all elements of the natural
3 and physical environment and to their way of living within
4 that environment.

5 Given this major concern of a minority group
6 that has already suffered numerous invasions of its
7 territory and pollutions of its land in epic proportions,
8 how can DOE credibly claim there would be no

9 disproportionately high and adverse impacts to minority or
10 low income populations as a result of the proposed action?
11 The DEIS simply continues the U.S. government's historical
12 practice of brushing aside the concerns of Native
13 Americans.

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14 One should not think that moving nuclear
15 waste from its current sites to Yucca Mountain would take
16 the problem off our hands. The proposed action would in
17 fact create a whole host of new environmental problems.

18 The DEIS does not do its job of informing the
19 American people of the risks of burying nuclear waste at
20 Yucca Mountain. Thank you.