

DEC 09 1999

MS. LALO: (Spoke in native language). I am Western Shoshone. My name is Bernice. I come here to talk to you. Are you going to understand me?

Because the things that you say in the EIS are just as foreign to you as something I said to you just a minute ago.

(Spoke in native language.) Are you going to hear me? Because that EIS that you have on your table there is just as foreign to some of us in here as the Western Shoshone language is to many except the Western Shoshone.

I wanted to start with that because I think there's a difference here. The difference is the language. The language that DOE speaks is not the language of the Western Shoshone, nor is it the language of many of the people that are in here. You turn to page 202 over there, do you think everyone in this room will understand that? I don't think so. I think that you will find many people that do not understand a word on that page.

And when Carie was talking about time immemorial, she was talking about time that no one can remember, and that's how long we have been here. When we fought against Rock Creek, they told us that. They said, Well, you Shoshones, you have only been here for 2,000 years, and we said, And how long has Lander County been here?

So we'd like to ask that same question. How long has Nevada been here? How long has DOE been in existence?

We have been here longer than DOE, or Eureka County, or Lander County, or the State of Nevada. And we have been here as long-risk participants in everything that the U.S. has prepared for us. We have been participants in land theft, we have been participants in language loss, we have been participants in the loss of cultural pride, we have been participants in genocide.

This is not new to us here, people. This is something we have lived with for hundreds of years, millions of years.

And we are telling you that we are now participants of a long-risk program here. Not just the Western Shoshone here. We here in this room are participants of a long-risk death program here.

And Carie was talking about the animals. UYou know those animals that come from near Yucca Mountain, near the Nevada Test Site, those are animals we eat. I mean, they might sound repugnant to you, but we eat squirrels and deer and gophers, and way back when we might have eaten snakes and

whatever. But those are animals that do not know the boundaries of the little easement that you are going to put alongside the railroad. Those are animals that we're going to consume.

And no one has put a study together to tell us about the long risk that we are going to have to take when we consume those animals. Those animals are part of our heritage. They are part of the program that we give to that little guy right there.

You know last year he went to the Western Shoshone defense project, Shoshone gathering. He didn't know anything, but we were eating yaha (phonetic), which is our favorite food, and you guys probably go yick, but we roasted it and we took the hair off and it was singed and it was black, and he didn't know any better. So he just took the tails that they were throwing away.

But you know, he's learning, and he was four last -- four, three, three and-a-half, somewhere like that. And those are traditional foods. And no one has bothered to study what is happening to us because of our traditional foods. No one can tell him that, you know, he can't go eat that. Because that is part of who we are.

And you know, even as far as the terms that people use here, we're talking about, you know, people say earth mother, earth mother, da, da, da, da, but the language that we use to describe it is called solvia (phonetic). It means mother and it means earth.

I mean, there is no difference. When you go to pick something up, there's no scientific term for it. That's just what it says. Exactly.

And so in this concept, in this cultural concept, when you're taking this down to Yucca Mountain, the transportation, we are talking about genocide. And we have long been participants in this. So I wanted you to know that.

And the radiation that comes from this transportation, we will be the long-term participants in that, and the people that live here will be also. But the animals that live there will bring it back to us, and we'll have double jeopardy because that's part of our traditional foods.

So we have had a long-term participation with radiation, low level, high level, bombs, you name it, we have been there. We have people that are now in this part suffering the cancers that come from the radiation that they never have studied, the native exposure, the native pathways.

But I think now we're talking about this, and we're talking about not just like 10,000 years down the road. You know, I bet if I surveyed 50 people in here, 50 percent of the people in here, they would come from Iowa, New Mexico, New York, I don't know where. But anyway, but the Shoshones are born

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(cont'd.)

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here. This is their territory.

I mean, it doesn't matter if you have a piece of paper that is a quitclaim deed that says that we deeded it to the United States. We didn't. We have not. And until something happens where the political circle rides against us, we will always claim this as Western Shoshone land.

As a matter of fact, we have got some of the people in government circles almost trained, almost. We go on a tour and they ask us for comments, and we say, Well, you know what it is going to be? And this archeologist from Battle Mountain, BLM, she says -- well, I say, What is it? What is our first comment? She says, It's Western Shoshone country. And we say, You got it. We're finally teaching you something.

But anyway, that's where we're coming from.

And as far as nature goes, we know about the amount of accidents that happen in this country. You can go outside and look at my truck, it's got bashes on both sides. That was that winter, that was that winter, that was that winter, you know.

3 And I'll tell you what. [When I went to Albuquerque about six years ago, I passed these semis on the road, and I saw them tipped over in the median between the two highways. And I know those are the routes they are going to be taking. And I know the risks that those truck drivers take.] I know when my windshield has no space in it to see, and I know when I see them laying down on their side.

[So you cannot tell me that the transportation is safe. You cannot tell me that. Because we live here, we know what it is like.] We know you have to go two miles versus 200. We know that.

[Those are weather conditions that are natural to this area. They are not going to stop just because DOE is going to come here. They are not going to stop just because you are going to put on a railroad. They are icy conditions here, and we are all going to be impacted by that.] We're going to talk about something else.

4 [Now when you are talking about how fast or how slow that water is going to go and that you are going to be able to trail it, and that you are going to be able to trail it for 10,000 years, I don't think so. Because you don't have science that is that accurate.

And then we already are buying water from the store. We're already buying 36 cent containers, we're already buying 69 cent containers, and I bet even in your purse there you probably got a dollar ninety worth of water. And that is what we're going to be looking at.

Your science is not accurate enough to predict 10,000 years.] I don't know what I look like, but I

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ain't no fool. I mean, I don't think these people are either.

And that's just the bare fact. It is not science. It is just something that you are asking us to believe, and I think there's more intelligence in this room than whatever.

But anyway, we're not asking for this to come here. And I'll tell you what. You know they taught my little boy how to say the Pledge of Allegiance, but in the end it says justice for all.

I don't think so. It's not justice for all. It's just us maybe for DOE. Just us.

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