

Testimony to: U.S. Department of Energy

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Date: January 20, 2000

Subject: Radioactive Shipments to Yucca Mountain, NV

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1 As a citizen of the St. Louis area, I am very concerned about the prospect of rail and truck shipments of high-level radioactive spent fuel rods on rail lines and interstate highways through St. Louis. With 79 of the country's 103 operating nuclear reactors located east of the Mississippi River, there is likely to be a radioactive shipment approximately every two days through this region. I am concerned that the extent of these shipments raises the risk of accidental exposure enormously. To borrow a phrase, "until we're sure this so-called solution will improve the problem, let's not rush to implement it."

2 I am concerned on behalf of those who will be put in harm's way as a result of DOE's proposed shipments, including both the public at large -- that is, anyone who breathes the air, drinks or bathes in the water, or lives on the land in this region -- and also the workers involved with these shipments. This latter group includes the following:

- Workers at the nuclear power plants who have to remove the spent fuel from spent-fuel pools in order to put the spent fuel into casks. Even with the use of remote equipment, these workers will be exposed to contaminated water in the pools and contaminated air in the buildings housing these pools.
- Truck drivers and railroad locomotive engineers who are in the vicinity of these casks during shipment and storage.
- Crews who monitor and maintain the vehicles that are used in these shipments.
- Workers at Yucca Mountain who unload casks and then empty shipping casks to put the spent fuel rods into disposal casks, during which time an unknown amount of radioactive gases and particulate matter is likely to be released. One reason for the likelihood of such releases is that the spent fuel rods that arrive at Yucca Mountain are all different. They have different histories, including their age, their years of use, the extent of their exposures to heat, water and radiation, and the condition of the welding of their metal tube cladding.
- Finally, the workers who move the disposal casks into the underground tunnels of Yucca Mountain both immediately and over the next 10,000 years will undoubtedly be exposed to radioactive emissions.

3 DOE's Environmental Impact Statement apparently tried to predict the number of cancers that would be caused by these shipments. However, a large number of other negative health impacts will also occur as a result of these shipments, including the following:

- Chromosomal aberrations
- Reproductive problems
- Immune system problems
- Endocrine system problems
- Circulatory problems

Has DOE studied the latter consequences of exposure to high level radiation. If so, what do your staff predict regarding these health consequences?