



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

Comment Sheet

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EIS001079

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Comments: (If possible, please reference section number and/or page number in document if applicable.)

1

When Congress amended the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1987 (NWPAA), they designated Yucca Mountain, Nevada, as the only site to be considered as a high level nuclear repository, removing all other sites which until then were also under consideration. The reasons for this were purely political, rather than scientific or technical. Yucca Mountain lies within the most earthquake-prone region of the country, which alone should have disqualified it from consideration long ago. However, because Nevada has only two representatives and two senators in Congress, we were easy target for members of Congress representing more powerful states also under consideration for a repository. As a result, the 1987 amendments referred to as the "Screw Nevada Bill."

2 ...

Even more troubling is the fact to help insure approval of the site, Congress undermined key provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) with respect to Yucca Mountain project. NWPAA as enacted limited the scope and extent of the evaluation of potential environmental impacts normally required in an environmental impact statement under NEPA. Specifically, NWPAA exempts the Yucca Mountain environmental impact statement from consideration of: the need for a repository; the time of initial availability of the

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.

2 repository; alternative sites to Yucca Mountain; and alternatives to geologic disposal of high-level waste. Congress has on other words significantly diminished the inherent value of conducting an environmental impact statement, in an apparent attempt to rubber stamp NEPA approval on the project.

3 The proposed Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1997, known as the "Mobile Chernobyl Bill," contains simular provisions gutting environmental laws and regulations with respect to nuclear waste transportation and storage. Knowing that this project could never meet radiation guidelines established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other regulatory agencies charged with protecting our health and safety, Congress has included in the bill broad, sweeping exemptions from local, state, or federal environmental standards governing the Yucca Mountain site, and raises limits on the amount of radiation in the drinking water near Yucca Mountain site, to a level 25 times higher than that at any other site.

4 It is unfair and immoral for Congress to deal with the problem of nuclear waste by dumping it on a politically weak state in a site that is technically and scientifically unsuited for the task. I advocate the storage of the waste on-site until a safe, equitable and scientifically sound solution to the problem can be found.

5 The DEIS violates the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As there is no alternative action presented in the DEIS normally required in an EIS. The Nuclear Waste Policy Act as amended in 1987 states that "...the Secretary [of Energy] shall not be required...to consider the need for a repository, the alternatives to geological disposal, or alternative sites to Yucca Mountain site;". The Department of Energy (DOE) could have and was asked (1995 scoping hearings) to consider alternative actions, and yet the DOE didn't.

6

Insufficient transportation analysis. There is not clear picture of the transportation routes to be used, and specifically how the waste is to be transported. How is the public to make a decision on the impacts of the project when the transportation impacts can only be guessed? It should be crystal clear which routes are to be used, the mode of transportation, and where there will be stopping points for refueling ect., so that exposure rates can determined and health impacts evaluated.

7

The transportation casks have never been full-scale tested only 1/4 scale models were tested and the data was extrapolated using computer models to full-size. The General Atomics GA4/9 casks discussed in the dEIS have only just been licensed, but none have been made yey. It is unclear whether the tests are sufficient for all the conditions that will be encountered in cross country transit, especially through mountainous terrain.

8

Incomplete health impact assessment. It is assumed that the only radiation health impact is one of cancer fatality, " latent cancer fatality". Cancer fatality represents only one of many radiation health impacts: other possible effects are premature aging, mild mutations in offspring, excess tumors, and genetic and teratogenic effects.

9

Inadequate evaluation uncertainis. All of the "understanding" of how the repository will function in the future is based on computer models, so the long term impacts are based on arguably incomplete data fed into largely untested models. Since many of these models represent chaotic systems there can be little to no guesswork, otherwise the calculated results (long-term impacts) could bear no resemblance to reality.

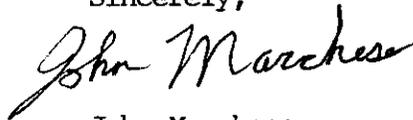
10 Why is it that the DOE doesn't trust computer models for nuclear weapons testing, but does for Yucca Mountain Project? Yucca Mountain performance in the far future is at least as complex as weapons design.

11 Violates Treaty of Ruby Valley. The DEIS fails to address the Western Shoshone protest of the use of land outlined in the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley with the United States. Use of their aboriginal land for the dumping of nuclear waste is outside the scope of the treaty. The Western Shoshone National Council contend that their ancestors would never have signed the Treaty of Ruby Valley had they been able to foresee the dumping of such a substance as nuclear waste on their sacred land. The Western Shosone Nation has declared their land, Newe Sogobia, nuclear free!

12 While there have been a number of hearings in Nevada, there will be only 10 hearings outside of Nevada. Thus creating insuffieient public process. As the sheer scope of the transportation portion of this project should require a public hearing in at least all major cities along the transportation routes which would travel thro through 43 states.

Finally, the DOE claims it would have been too costly to conduct more hearings. If this is so then why wasn't the hearing process budgeted into the entire project? It is hard to believe that the cost of good public process could even compare to the current expenditures, in the billions, as to date.

Sincerely,



John Marchese