Comments made during the Department of Energy Hearing, Tuesday, Feb. 1st, at the Hotel Intercontinental, Chicago, Illinois by Rita Bogolub of Berwyn, Illinois:

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1... I would like to thank the DOE for taking public comments in Chicago.

I would like to request that the initial question and answer period be put on the record.

There was not enough notice about this meeting, nor has there been enough public education or public input concerning the issue of a radioactive waste facility at Yucca Mt.

Concerning Yucca Mountain's inability to isolate waste:

2 - DOE's own data shows that the Yucca Mt. site will fail to contain nuclear waste - radioactive gases will be released and radioactive waste will be washed into the ground water a short time after the first containers fail.

- Containers do fail - about 70 dry storage casks are in use at reactors. There is already 1 'juvenile failure' - a cask with a faulty weld - in less than 20 years. Repository casks will be made of different material, but the manufacturing will be subject to the same problems...there will be more than 10 thousand repository casks ...and so likely hundreds of early cask failures.

3... - DOE and Congress have both changed the rules of the game repeatedly instead of disqualifying this site as their own regulations would call for. Originally, the DOE was to propose and study 3 alternative sites.

- Over 200 local, state, national and international environmental/ public interest organizations petitioned the DOE to disqualify the site under existing repository Site Suitability Guidelines. DOE is in the process of attempting to change these Guidelines, even while they are taking public comment on an Environmental Impact Statement that should be based on them.

- DOE denied the petition to disqualify, not because they could prove the 200 groups were wrong, but because they want to study the site more in order to try to prove the 200 groups wrong...in the mean time the site violates a disqualifying condition for nuclear waste repositiories that requires that water move very slowly in the ground. DOE's data shows that water travels very quickly through the Yucca Mt. rock.

- Since the Yucca Mt. site is not fit to isolate nuclear waste, DOE has come to rely on engineered barriers for containment...contradicting the legislative mandate for the program which selected geologic isolation. If DOE is going to rely on engineered structures, the whole process must be started over to examine appropriate siting and design for engineered isolation.

Rita Bogolub

3 cont. - Instead of holding public hearings on Yucca, DOE should be holding public meetings on how to start over on a high-level nuclear waste program.

4 - Yucca Mt. repository project violates a treaty with the Western Shoshone Nation: there is an unsettled land dispute which DOE ignores.

- DOE also ignores the law of the State of Nevada, which prohibits radioactive waste sites there.

Transport of irradiated nuclear fuel:

5 - I have concerns about the specific routes through Illinois, especially their proximity to schools, hospitals, water and food storage.

9 - I am concerned about environmental protection, safety, liability, disaster management, worker safety, incidental radiation exposure, property values. How will 30 years of nuclear waste shipments through Illinois impact the Chicago area, and what plans do you have for shipping accidents?

6 - Nationally, this is the largest nuclear waste shipping campaign in history, affecting 43 states, hundreds of towns and cities, and moving more high-level waste each year than the last 30 years combined. 50 million people live within 1/2 mile of the projected routes. More public education and input is needed.

7 - Locally, Illinois is expected to receive the third largest number of shipments - as many as 13,000 over the next 30 years, or an average of 8 per week, every week, for 30 years, all requiring costly escort services.

8 - DOE's Environmental Impact Statement assumes specific routes, but these have only just been released. The public needs more time to study them.

- DOE averages those impacted by a severe shipping accident across the whole US population when they say there is "no significant impact" in early analysis. This is not acceptable.

- DOE needs to provide a reasonable No Impact Alternative.

1 cont. Finally, there has not been enough public education or input on this issue. This hearing should be the beginning, not the end, of public input and education. There are too many questionable items concerning the ablility of Yucca Mt. to isolate waste safely and concerning the ability of irradiated nuclear fuel to be transported safely, for the Yucca Mt. plan to be given the go-ahead.

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Rita Bogolub