

JAN 28 2000

1 DENNIS KUCINICH: Thanks very much. Thanks everyone for being here today. I want to thank the representatives from the Department of Energy for their presence. Welcome to the City of Cleveland. I'm -- I do want to express my disappointment; however, that some of the people who are trying to get in here, are having trouble finding parking. I know you have so many important jobs to do. I just hope when you hand over the logistics, you'll provide for the public the convenience in making sure they have parking. And I want to thank you never-the-less for holding this hearing in this area.

There's a great degree of interest in the issue of the transportation of radioactive waste. It's a very powerful issue in Northern Ohio, not only because of the present situation but that this metropolitan area is actually bracketed by two major nuclear power plant facilities, also because of the geographic situation in Northern Ohio as a passage for so much of the nuclear waste.

2 Now, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement represents what I believe is the continued short sighted thinking of our nation's nuclear waste policy. The federal government, as people are aware, has made many promises in the past about nuclear power including the absurd statements that nuclear power would be too cheap to meter, that it would be safe, that there would be no side effects and it's just how it was sold to the public 35 years ago. Our experience in Northeastern Ohio has been a little bit different though. Unfortunately, rates at this part of the State end up being twice what they are in the southern part of the State, not counting for public power simply because of the high cost of nuclear power. The short sighted thinking on nuclear power continues with Ohio's unfair burden of nuclear waste transportation.

Ohio receives approximately eight percent of its power from nuclear power plants. In Ohio and in the Cleveland metropolitan region we'll be subjected to thousands of high-level nuclear waste shipments from the nuclear reactors from the New England and the mid-Atlantic regions.

The assurances from the Department of Energy and the nuclear industry in that transporting nuclear waste is safe would be more convincing if people were not aware of promises that were made in the past and promises have been broken.

3 On December 6th, 1999 I and several of my colleagues in the House of Representatives sent letter to the Secretary asking for important information regarding the routes of nuclear waste transport. I just learned that the Department of Energy has granted this request and placed potential nuclear waste transportation maps for all 50 states on the internet.

continued on page 2 However, I also requested a 180 day extension and a second hearing opportunity for those communities that did not have the information necessary to be fully aware of the Department of Energy actions. The release of the maps occurred on January 21st, 2000, only 19 days before the close of the comment period on February 9th, 2000. Thus, the ability of the American public to understand where the waste may travel and count on these routes was severely curtailed because they were given 19 days out of the original 180 days to comment.

3 I will note the presence here of the Mayor of the City of Bay Village who is one of my
 continued constituents and represents my constituents at the western most part of my district. And
 4 communities such as Bay Village and others, I think, would have liked to have had more input on
 this.

We know that the -- according to the maps, the routes used in the DEIS make Ohio the
 gateway of Yucca Mountain for all the commercial nuclear power reactors in the northeastern
 and mid-Atlantic states. The highway routes used in DEIS make Ohio a major corridor state for
 truck shipments to Yucca Mountain. Three of the principal truck routes from the eastern reactors
 are from Ohio, Pennsylvania on I-90, I-80 and I-76 converge on the Ohio turnpike on 80 and 90
 in Elyria. Up to 18,900 truckloads of high-level waste, about 20 percent of the total, to traverse
 Ohio over 39 years. Under this scenario, an average of 1.3 trucks per day would travel through
 Ohio every day for decades.

Rail shipments to Yucca Mountain would also heavily impact Ohio. Under the DEIS
 routing scenarios, the two major streams of rail shipments to Yucca Mountain converge in
 Cleveland at the interchange of Conrail's main lines to Buffalo and Harrisburg. A smaller
 number of shipments travel from Norfolk Southern to Cleveland or Chicago. Rail shipments
 along these routes are almost 1,000 route miles in Ohio. Up to 4,200 rail shipments of high-level
 waste, about 21 percent in total, traverse Ohio over 39 years. Under either scenario an average of
 one shipment every two days would travel through Ohio for three or four decades.

One of the concerns that I raised as a member of Congress in the debate over Yucca
 Mountain was that this waste not be shipped through major populated areas was that, in the
 alternative, that the waste be accompanied with a heavy number of security, that the communities
 be alerted in advance of the shipment of waste. That safety personnel be trained so as to be able
 to handle any unforeseen possibility of an accident. And that all efforts would be made to try and
 protect the people. Well, unfortunately, none of those things really are effectively being done.

I'm concerned about the health impact and I'll conclude with this statement. I'm
 concerned that the 10th district, which I represent, and beyond the 10th district is being asked to
 accept a massive increase in transportation and radiological risks to transport this waste in an
 expedited manner to the satisfaction of the nuclear industry. While you're called upon to handle
 this problem with Yucca Mountain, we have a major problem in our energy policy because this
 waste is going to keep being created. And unless we start to look at the development of new
 energy technologies so this Country can transit from this wasteful and dangerous nuclear
 technology, which future generations will be saddled with, we will have done a disservice if we
 don't find other ways to create energy.

Now, this Draft Environmental Impact Statement fails to fully inform my constituents of
 the risks of this waste. According to the testimony from the State of Nevada, which we were able
 to obtain for purposes of filing a response to the DEIS. The typical characteristics of waste to be
 transported contained 31,000 curies of cesium-137, 21,000 curies of strontium-90 and as a
 powerful source of penetrating gamma and neutron radiations. A surface dose rate is estimated
 to at least 10,000 REM per hour or about 166 REM per minute. A person standing or sitting next

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to unshielded assembly that would be containing this waste would receive, at least, 100 REM per minute. And I think people would want to know if they're getting dozens of free x-rays as they're moving through traffic, as they're sitting in their living rooms with trains passing by. These issues must be looked at to protect the public health.

The first concern here should not be the transportation of nuclear waste, the first concern should be the public's health and when you can secure the public's health, without any question and in doing that through public hearing, that's the point at which I think it's logical to have a discussion about the transportation of this waste. |

So, again, I want to express my gratitude to this panel for it's willingness to give me the opportunity to testify. I want to express my appreciation for the people who came here and who will sit here all day to indicate their concerns. This issue does not call for a response of fear, it calls for a clear, well reasoned, intellectual and even visionary response so that we can know what kind of a country -- not that we just have created or have but what kind of a country we will become. Part of that is your responsibility, we are grateful for the chance to come before you. And, again, thank you so much.