

RECEIVED

EIS001799

JEAN PONZI

JAN 20 2000

1 MS. PONZI: I'm Jean Ponzi. Thank you for coming to St. Louis. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to speak and thanks -- do you have any idea how many of the people who came to this hearing today probably did not know anything about this issue at all until the St. Louis Post Dispatch finally saw fit to cover it on Monday of this week? Major media ignored this issue and only grass roots publicity was operating until Monday of this week, and yet this was the turnout, so I would like to ask the DOE sincerely to extend the public comment period. I think it would be a great boost to the credibility of the Department of Energy in looking out for the citizens of the United States to extend this public comment period to give that grass roots publicity a chance to work through the mainstream media and get the word out even further, perhaps even contact some legislators and let them know how we feel about this issue in addition to officials of the USDOE.

2... I am unequivocally opposed to the transport of radioactive waste from power plants by rail or truck through populated areas across the U.S. to a storage site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. I happen to be an environmental educator professionally. I teach about resource conservation to elementary and secondary students and their teachers throughout the greater St. Louis area and beyond. One of the subjects that I have the opportunity to cover in-depth is energy. Therefore, I am keenly aware of the financial pressures the utility companies are dealing with as deregulation of their industry proceeds, and this is taking much longer than utility company officials figured, so it's costing more.

3... I know very well that the storage of radioactive wastes produced at nuclear power plants all over this country, indeed around the world, is a cost burden that utility companies are intent on fleeing and I know that utility companies are pressuring federal agencies including, but not limited to the Department of Energy, to take responsibility for the utility company's own radioactive waste materials which we, the ratepayers, have paid to generate -- build power plants and generate in the first place. And yes, we as consumers are creating that demand and need to address that with energy efficiency, and yet here we are expected to pay the bill.

I also know that the electric utility industry has long been directing its well-funded lobbyists to intensively pressure Congress to finalize federal assumption of responsibility for power plant waste; that means taxpayer assumption of responsibility for power plant wastes, and I think this equation is wrong. Now, my community is unprepared to handle the kinds of emergency situations that can result from accidents or attacks during this transportation.

...2 I live in the City of St. Louis and the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis at a meeting that I attended on February 6th, 1998 unanimously -- voted unanimously to resolve to completely oppose this transportation plan, and I was very pleased to hear a St. Louis County official here tonight delivering that same kind of unanimous opposition from the St. Louis County Council. I hope the City Board of Alderman made it here today with that, too.

Their Resolution No. 242 reads in part, "Whereas, the City of St. Louis is without sufficient trained emergency personnel, equipment and financial resources to safeguard its residents in the event of a nuclear transport accident, and the shipment of nuclear waste material through the City of St. Louis would therefore be a major risk, we are opposed to any federal or state legislation which would permit the transportation of high-level radioactive waste through the metropolitan St. Louis area until such time as a deep geologic repository has been sited, built and placed in operation for the permanent disposal of the nation's high-level radioactive waste." That has not yet happened, and I realize that you're talking about this and meeting about it and hearing testimony of citizens and lobbyists and yet that plan is not fully fleshed out. Why are we already beginning to have that transportation of waste and the transportation plan itself 30 years long moving forward?

MR. BROWN: One minute.

...3 MS. PONZI: Thank you. [Economics must not dictate a plan that has such tremendous horrific potential
4 determine the disposal of nuclear power plant wastes.] Energy efficiency is important to preach and
practice and it pays off, and perhaps using demand-side management economics, it could pay back the
investment of power companies needed to keep their wastes on site where facilities are already set up to
contain and monitor them. I suggest that U.S. power companies, directed by the DOE, redirect their
abundant lobbying dollars into research that might yield technologies to safely encapsulate the radioactive
waste already in existence still at the sites where they were produced. If there's a penalty to be paid for
generating and needing to manage these wastes, let the generators pay it. These costs must not be passed
on to local safety authorities, into our health care system, into the hands of train engineers and truck
drivers and into the lives of individual Americans.]

5 [I say no to this cross-country transportation plan and to the siting of all of our country's nuclear power
6 plant radioactive waste in one site in this country,] and [I ask you again heartedly to extend this public
comment period to give more people who may not have been as well prepared or as well educated or as
willing to come out at this time of year a chance to learn about these issues and express their feelings and
address their legislators about them, too.] Thank you very much.