

EIS001828



2/24/00

RECEIVED

FEB 28 2000

Wendy Dixon, EIS Manager
 Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
 Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
 U.S. Department of Energy M/S 010
 P.O. Box 30307
 North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

Dear Ms. Dixon:

This letter is a response to the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain. The Southern Nevada Home Builders Association consists of 750 member companies involved in the residential building industry and is an affiliate of the National Home Builders Association. These companies employ thousands of Southern Nevada residents and are truly community stakeholders. Our comments will address the industry concerns of nuclear waste transportation and storage within Southern Nevada.

1 [It is clear that while transportation of nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain remains an uncertainty, nuclear power industry executives are fixated on pushing the process forward with little or no concern for the residents of Southern Nevada. This point is displayed by Rod McCullum of the Nuclear Energy Institute when stating the process should move forward recognizing there is an "involuntary risk" in disposing of nuclear waste. The transportation of nuclear waste poses a clear and undeniable risk to the residents and economy of Southern Nevada. Furthermore, such comments undermine and trivialize the very real concerns we have about the impacts on our communities for years to come.

2 [Given Clark County's potential role in the transportation of nuclear waste, adverse impacts to property values and tourism have not been adequately addressed. As demonstrated in New Mexico, perceived risk can lead to a decrease in property values.]
 3 [With that in mind, we can be reasonably assured that additional health consequences or a nuclear waste-related accident along
 4 the transportation corridor would have severe ramifications on public health, safety and property values in Southern Nevada.]
 5 [The DEIS does not include current populations figures or future projections along the proposed routes. Without question significant growth along the corridor, in a County that holds 70% of the state's residents, will have very serious implications for future generations of Southern Nevadans.]

6 [The population element in the DEIS should also include visitors to our county. More than 32 million tourists annually augment the population of the metro Las Vegas area, situated directly along the proposed truck route.]
 7 [This is not to be overshadowed by the fact that tourism as a whole is the lifeblood of Southern Nevada. The economy of our region and state depends on these visitors, visitors who may choose not to come if nuclear waste is transported through the Las Vegas Valley.]

EIS001828

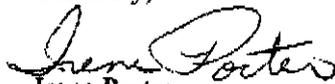
7 In the view of many thousands of residents and visitors who use the local roadways, driving alongside shipments of nuclear waste is unacceptable. These routes are essential to both commerce and residents in the valley. Should either highway be compromised by an accident involving the shipment of nuclear waste, impacts to the community would be devastating.

8 In economic terms, the construction of a repository in our region can only be viewed in a negative light. Job creation at the proposed repository, even at periods of peak employment, is greatly outweighed by the negative impacts of nuclear waste transportation and storage. Additionally, we enjoy very robust economic conditions in the region. Our unemployment figures are some of the lowest in the country and future projections are very positive. Quite simply, any job creation at the proposed repository is easily mitigated by current and future growth in the regional economy.

9 Many concerns relative to public health have not been adequately investigated. The DOE's projections for latent cancer fatalities are only estimations and cannot provide accurate assessments of the long-term health consequences. And as we know, the aftereffects of a nuclear waste-related accident would have far-reaching impacts for the current and future citizens of Southern Nevada.

As home builders, it is imperative that we remain sensitive to the needs and interests of current and future residents of Southern Nevada. Some would say that this effort is made merely to enhance the position of our industry. But it is much more than strategic planning. It is our obligation as community stakeholders and a duty that we hold in very high regard. The time has come for our voices to be heard in this debate. Decisions made today will touch the hearts, minds, and lives of Southern Nevadans for many years to come.

Sincerely,



Irene Porter
Executive Director