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MS. McHUGH: My name is Sue McHugh. I'm a registered nurse in Henderson.

1 Regarding the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository, the most notable statement in the Draft EIS is, quote "further the complexity and variability of the natural system at Yucca Mountain, the long period evaluated, 10,000 years and incomplete information or the unavailability of some information have resulted in uncertainty in the analysis and findings," end of quote. No one knows what earth or environmental changes will occur anywhere in 10,000 years or even ten years. There is no society that has survived for 10,000 years. The pyramids were built approximately 5,000 years ago and we are just now in the last fifty years starting to decipher the hieroglyphics. We still do not understand what happened to their society or to the Mayans or to the cells or to any other advanced civilization, all of which have vanished.

2 My brothers and I were born and raised in the Las Vegas area during the above- and below-ground bomb testing at the Nevada Test Site. One of my brothers and myself have suffered from melanoma, and one brother has another illness. My half brother who was raised in Southern California has suffered no such medical problems. There's no family history of any similar medical conditions. I don't know if any of these medical problems are related to testing at the Nevada Test Site, but I am very aware of the high incidence of cancers among downwinders in Southern Utah. I will say that there is a lot of nuclear contamination of air, land, table and surface water in and around the Nevada Test Site. There are also continuing questions as to land secondary to nuclear testing near existing fault lines.

4... We are dealing with an industry less than fifty years old, a technology in its infancy. At the present time, we do not fully understand what the possible hazards, benefit and potentials associated with nuclear industry waste and this natural resource. Within the next ten to fifty years, we may have the knowledge, ability to profitably utilize and recycle our current waste. It seems very premature to offer these immediate, poorly viable solutions to a problem that is so complex and potentially so hazardous at this time. Greater reactors, recycling of potential future use of our current waste products.

5 The transportation of high-level nuclear waste across the country jeopardizes tens of millions of American citizens. The potential for accidents and resultant exposure to good samaritans, emergency responders and the lack of qualified trained haz-mat teams capable of rapid response to an emergency situation of this magnitude and trained for nuclear exposure puts millions of unwitting Americans at risk.

6 The site at Yucca Mountain is very precarious, with the severity of earthquakes in the Southern California area and in Southern Nevada and even Yucca Mountain areas. The DEIS states that the 5.6 earthquake in 1992 caused no detectable damage at the Yucca Mountain site. This is a false statement as there was significant damage to some buildings at the site. If that had been the nuclear waste transfer area, it could have the potential to create nuclear nightmare for surrounding communities, including Southern Nevada, Southern Utah and areas of Southern California. At the present time some of these are relatively low populated areas, but all the potentially affected areas are experiencing phenomenal growth in population and tourism.

The Draft EIS repeatedly references a population of about 28,000 within fifty miles. However, when the population within how many miles of the site is considered, as it should be, the number of population would increase dramatically. If there were an accidental exposure via the air or water, it would definitely impact many more people than the fifty mile radius claims.

7... There is volcanic area -- volcanic activity in the area. The Cascade Mountain Range was inactive in May 1980, and there's been increased volcanic activity worldwide. The assurances of the chance of a volcanic

7 cont. eruption during the first 10,000 years after closure is one in 7,000, or probably similar to what the residents of Mt. St. Helens were told for years prior to their eruption. I believe that these are misleading numbers and assumptions on the geology of the Yucca Mountain area.

8 There's no recommendation as to which thermal load scenario is planned. I appreciate the attempts made to protect workers by creating a negative pressure gradient on the mountain, thus keeping any other exposures away from the workers on the development side and into the nuclear waste and placement here. My concern is that these casks that are vented with the heat from the thermal load, whichever method is utilized, if the prior method is used, will drift with the wind. Any radiation coming from a canister would also be vented away, reminiscent of the above-ground testing at the Nevada Test Site, which would affect the downwinders.

9 The dust prevention techniques used such as water sprays could lead to faster and higher levels of water
10 contamination. With the low water table, it could also vaporize and increase air contamination. The highest radiation risk to the public is stated as being caused by Radon 222. There's never been a history on so much radioactive material in one site as is proposed for Yucca Mountain. We've seen what happened at Three Mile Island in 1979, Chernobyl in 1986 and just recently in Japan with markedly lower amounts of radioactive material.

MR. LAWSON: Thirty seconds, please.

11 MS. McHUGH: The numbers quoted for an accident are optimistic at best. Because of the large quantities of radioactive material, radiological considerations would outweigh most radiological concerns under most accident conditions. The report does not address non-malignant radiological effects to exposed populations, including degenerative changes and impaired function of blood vessels, bone marrow, kidneys, lungs, eyes, reproductive organs and thyroid. Doses of as little as 150 rads have been known to cause death within four to six weeks. Even doses less than a 150 rads will cause degenerative changes in multiple organ systems. There are -- is -- statements regarding increased power requirements. I question why when you've got that much keeping emitted that you would need to increase the power.

12 In summary, I believe that the no action scenario is non-viable as is the Yucca Mountain site. It may be
4 cont. better to leave this dilemma to future generations with more advanced technology and ethics to deal with this issue. It would be better to leave it to future generations than to go forward with an ill thought out plan that they will be required to clean up or deal with for the next 10,000 years. Perhaps a best alternative would be to go back to planning sessions for alternative uses, recycling, breeder reactors, perhaps some other use that we have not yet considered. The above-ground nuclear testing at Nevada Test Site has caused numerous deaths, injuries, birth defects and hazards because the powers at that time felt that it would be all right.

We hopefully learned from the mistakes of the past and have learned not to repeat those same mistakes. A multinational task force of nuclear powers and nations affected by nuclear waste and hazards perhaps moderated by the United States may be the best place to initiate this discussion. Utilizing the best minds, creativity and education of the world rather than limiting it to our nation alone may yield some dramatic result. This is a problem for the planet, not just our country, and the populations of the planet should be
13 involved in finding a viable solution. Storage in a mountain created in a volcano and situated on active earthquake fault lines for 10,000 years is not a viable solution. Congress needs to make some decisions and the DOE needs to return this project to Congress as unsuitable. Thank you.