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Subject: SDEIS Comment

Part of Records Package / Supplement / Correction

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1. Why Are Supplement Hearings So Limited? Yucca Mt. is a national program, and there has been a great deal of national interest already. This Supplemental EIS should be presented in national public hearings. Hearings should also be held throughout Nevada. Why are they limited to Amargosa Valley, Pahrump and Las Vegas? Nevada has two major population centers, and many impacted people in rural areas, being no less worthy the

urban areas, have just as much right to take advantage of the poster session, question and answer period as well as express their opinions on these documents. While the DOE is unquestionably upholding its legal responsibilities according to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, this is another example of the DOE failing to uphold it's moral and ethical responsibility to the public.

2. The hearings are on the SDEIS. However, in order to thoroughly understand this document, you also need the Science & Engineering Report as well as the original Draft EIS. These documents don't automatically come with the SDEIS and have to be

ordered separately even though the SDEIS refers to and relies heavily on them. 45 days is not sufficient time to be able to research, comprehend all the related documents, and comment on the SDEIS. I'm formally asking for a 45 day extension of the comment period for the SDEIS. This is a reasonable request, since the date for the Final EIS is not firm.

2 3. Under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Yucca Mt.

Repository must show a "Proposed Action", (in this case, "to construct, operate and monitor, and eventually close a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste") as well as alternatives. This Supplement is insufficient because it does not provide specific design alternatives for the Proposed Action. Instead, it describes a range of design features and operational parameters that could be combined to arrive at two alternative designs - "above boiling drift wall temperature" or "below boiling waste container surface temperature". Page 2-20 shows proposed use of an area that hasn't even been investigated yet.

4. These identified features and parameters (see Table 2-1) are said to "bound" the design so the range of potential impacts could be analyzed. It does not identify specific alternatives for which these impacts could be compared. There is no reason to accept this "bounding" approach, since the 1999 DEIS made the

same claim, and this Supplement has impacts that are outside THOSE bounds. What will happen with the Final EIS as the design continues to "evolve"?

3 5. According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) The DOE must have a final design for the license application. The site recommendation is more important than the license application, because it is what the President will make his determination on whether or not to recommend Yucca Mt. to Congress. The Final EIS must be as clear as the NRC license application, and must indicate a final design choice. This Supplement does nothing to achieve that.

4 6. Additional design work in this Supplement, as well as assertions by the DOE of safety, etc., are based on the presumption that currently proposed regulations will be finalized (thereby disregarding hundreds, if not thousands, of comments to the contrary). The supplemental DEIS asserts that the proposal is safe by these new, less rigorous guidelines. There can be no Final EIS until all proposed regulations are finalized, and the DOE can assert that the proposed action can meet them. All of this additional design work is based on the presumption that the proposed regulations will be adopted. This entire process is premature. How can we move forward without final, safe, publicly acceptable guidelines in place?

5 7. The Supplement does not acknowledge any uncertainties now on record regarding repository performance. These include uncertainties of alloy 22, (the metal which is supposed to keep the waste isolated from the environment), titanium drip shields, (which would not be put in place until closure of the Repository, up to 300 years from emplacement of the waste) and

uncertainties in subsurface performance of these metals. This Supplement does not acknowledge the orders of magnitude of uncertainty that the DOE waste package peer review is now questioning. (The Alloy-22 initial peer review report is due in September, final report in February 2002.) Why don't we work on "eliminating" the uncertainties instead of just "reducing"

them?

6 8. Yucca Mt. is in the third most active earthquake zone in the U.S. In the Supplement, the DOE considers aging (cooling) up to 4,500 dry storage casks of spent commercial fuel for up to 50 years on 200 acres of cement pad near the North Portal (page 2-8; 3-7; figure 2-4). The Supplement does not consider the seismic risk for this facility. If it had to be licensed separately under NRC rules for "Independent Spent Fuel Storage Facility Installations" (10 CFR Part 72) it would probably fail.

7 9. If fuel aging is part of the selected design, why not age the fuel at the reactor sites for 50 years? This would be a modification (realistic) for the No-Action Alternative in the DEIS. It would reduce transportation hazards, and allow more time for responsible scientific research and review.

8 10. Fuel Blending- the process of mixing fuel assemblies of different temperatures to lower a waste package temperature has never been done before. To do this safely, the exact history of each fuel assembly must be known. Any mistakes in record keeping could lead to mistakes in packaging, and more uncertainties in the repository performance. The Supplement fails to talk about any specific plans or mechanics for fuel blending. The Supplement

makes no mention of possible impacts of incorrect record keeping, and unknown waste package temperatures from blending.

9 11. The Waste Handling Building would have a large storage pool, holding 12,000 fuel assemblies, as an inventory for fuel blending. The "design basis accident" used is the seismic collapse of the Waste Handling Building (page 3-11). The dose stated is less than that presented in the original DEIS, without this pool in the design. This is because the accident scenario includes damage to all the spent fuel in dry containers in the

building in both cases. The pool is ignored as a risk. However, if the building collapses, the pool will too, because it is built to the same specifications as the building. Therefore the accident scenario should include the consequence of damaging all the fuel in the pool as well, as well as water-born contamination.

12. The waste water from the fuel pools, and from washing down the transportation casks, would go through an ion exchange, supposedly trapping all the radionuclides in a filter. The water would then go to evaporation pools, while the filters

10 would be disposed of as low-level radioactive waste. The Supplement should not assume the repository water supply will come from appropriated water from the State (page 2-19 and 3-6. Water will not be available unless the State Engineer is overturned on appeal. The Supplement should look at alternative water sources and evaluate the impacts of these alternatives.

11 13. Radon releases for the low temperature scenario are very large (page 3-4), but the doses and latent cancer deaths are low. This is because the calculations use a 20 kilometer

boundary, with all air dilution, to cut the doses. The 20 km boundary (proposed in emission standards not yet passed) is for regulating doses from released waste. Radon doses from construction, were not taken into account. Also, radon doses should be counted near the source, outside of the restricted operations area, because that's where people will get doses.

12 14. Section 3.1.1 talks about how DOE would obtain "permanent control" of the land surrounding the repository site, yet makes no mention of how it plans to "own" that area. The area in question (in fact all of Yucca Mountain) is part of the Western Shoshone Nation, who oppose this project. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission requires DOE to prove ownership of the lands it plans

to use, yet the DOE does not have ownership, only control.

13... 15. The scope of this Supplement should have been broader so

13 cont that it addressed insufficiencies commented on at previous hearings on the DEIS, such as employment and population figures in Nye County, transportation of High Level Waste throughout the nation, and more. This Supplement is simply an attempt to avoid having to rewrite the DEIS the way the DOE and the American Public knows should be done.

14 16 A U.S. Geological Survey study shows that flash flooding in the 300-square-mile area including Yucca Mountain and the Test Site could close highways disrupting the transportation of nuclear waste - and could interfere with above-ground repository operations. The observations made by USGS scientists during storms in 1995 and 1998 showed that the Amargosa River "has the potential to transport dissolved and particulate matter well

beyond the boundary of the (Nevada Test Site) and the Yucca Mountain area during periods of moderate to severe stream flow," the report concluded. Contaminated water could travel as far as Death Valley in California, the report found. The SDEIS does not consider runoff into Fortymile Wash or Topopah Wash, the subjects of the USGS report. The Supplement should include a storm water flooding analysis of the proposed 200 acre dry storage pad near the North Portal.