010257

RECEIVED
MAY 24 2001

EDWARD J. FRITZ
2070 COVENTRY ROAD, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44118
PHONE 216/371-2337 FAX 216/371-0619

May 24, 2001

Fax: 1-800-967-0739

COMMENTS ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN PROJECT
Executive Summary: Yucca Mountain Science and Engineering Report
Supplement to the Draft EIS

I am a Chemical Engineer who has followed the high-level nuclear waste problem since 1970. I wish I could endorse and support the Yucca Mountain project. The US and the World desperately need a viable method for storage and permanent disposal of high-level radwaste.

During the 1960's the Atomic Energy Commission performed an exhaustive study of waste disposal in a salt mine in Lyons, Kansas. The project died after the Kansas Geological Survey and other critics demonstrated that underground waste storage was not feasible, largely because of the high heat generation from the wastes. The Yucca Mountain project is simply a more elaborate repeat of Lyons. This prolonged study, like the Lyons study before it, simply buys time for the nuclear power industry and postpones the day when we have to stop using nuclear power.

The problem with high level radwastes is that they continue to generate significant amounts of heat for hundreds of years. This heat must be continuously transferred to the environment while isolating the wastes from the environment. In theory, the waste-containing strata will rise in temperature until long-term heat transfer equilibrium is reached and heat generation equals heat flow to the surface. In practice, the wastes will soon reach melting and volatilization temperatures and begin to migrate from the
1 repository depths. The idea that ventilation shafts and fans can be operated and maintained for hundreds of years implies long-term social and political stability that has never been demonstrated before.

2 I have gotten into arguments with other anti-nuclear people about my position on this matter. They say: "What do you propose to do with the wastes, what alternatives do you have?" My answer is that I do not have any alternatives except that we should stop producing the wastes. This of course means a worldwide ban on nuclear power generation.