

SEP 10 2001

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September 2, 2001

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Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office  
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management  
U.S. Department of Energy  
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Dear Ms. Dixon:

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend your meetings this September, therefore, I decided to express my thoughts in this letter.

I do not wish to deal with the suitability issue of Yucca Mountain as a repository, that is for the expert geologists, hydrologists, nuclear safety experts, and the Department of Energy to decide.

1... | What I wish to express is my concerns about pertains to the shipment and transportation of the spent fuel assemblies. I am not sure if what I am about to propose has even been considered, if not I strongly suggest that you research this as a viable option to the rail or truck transportation routes being proposed. |

I wish to preface the following with a statement of my previous employment expertise. During the mid 1980's I worked at the Nevada Test Site in Radiation Safety (RADSAFE), along with others I was responsible for the loading and shipping of 17 nuclear fuel assemblies from the EMAD facility in Jackass Flats to Idaho. My duties included the certification that the cask and truck were not externally contaminated before departure to Idaho, and likewise the certification that upon the transports return to Nevada it was also clean before it entered the EMAD facility for the next shipment of 3 spent fuel assemblies until they had all been transported.

...1 | Transportation via the Interstate highway system should be the safest route and would involve a minimum of additional expenditures of new funds for improvement or environmental impact. The construction of a complex new railway system or even an additional new railway line to circumvent cities along the route will likely be cost prohibitive and environmentally destructive. The cost involved in the shipment of the 125 spent fuel assemblies from western New York state to Idaho this fall is estimated at \$16 million and is difficult to imagine. At that cost the shipment of the 70,000 tons of spent fuel rods will cost billions of dollars. Has the transportation of nuclear fuel assemblies via air ever been considered?

My suggestions are as follows:

...1 1. Transport the fuel assemblies from their existing location to the nearest large military base with an airstrip that can accommodate C5 A transport aircraft.

2. Transport the spent nuclear fuel assemblies via air transport using C5 A military transports (my guess it that a C5 A transport could carry about 4 trailers with shipping casks that contain 3 assemblies each or possibly 6 without the tractors) . These transports could land at Camp Desert Rock airstrip or Indian Springs Air Force Base (both within the confines of federal property) and could then be transported via truck to Yucca Mountain. Although the Indian Springs location would require transportation via US 95 for about 22 miles to the Nevada Test Site boundary. Both of the above airstrips would likely require some widening to accommodate the large transport aircraft, but I believe the runways are long enough already.

3. Additional alternatives to consider might be: Construct a landing strip in Gold Flat north of Yucca Mountain, or on top of Yucca Mountain and have a vertical shaft drilled to transport the fuel assemblies to their final destination, although this might compromise the integrity of the tunnels. These locations would likely have minimum ecological impact to habitat and species. As a last resort, a landing strip could be constructed in Jackass Flats, although this would likely have the greatest ecological impact to habitat and species.

All of the above scenarios would require a minimum of additional security both along the route and upon arrival vs a considerable amount of security on train or truck transport. |

Would you kindly send me a copy of your latest "Summary" Draft Environmental Impact Statement to the above address.

Sincerely,



Philip A. Medica