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TESTIMONY OF GOVERNOR KENNY C. GUINN
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
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Good evening. On behalf of the citizens of the State of Nevada I would like to welcome you here this evening and hope my remarks and the remarks of the many concerned Nevadans who will speak later will be taken in the spirit in which they are intended. That is, honest, constructive, and impassioned public input on an issue that is paramount to the health and safety of every Nevadan, and every American whose home, school or place of business sits along the proposed paths that the deadliest substance on earth, if the DOE has its way, will take to Nevada.

This debate is not new. As many of you know, Nevada's fight to keep the nuclear waste repository from coming to Yucca Mountain has raged on for nearly 20 years. Unlike many of the policy battles that grip Washington, however, this fight transcends party affiliation, socio-economic classes, race or gender and galvanizes Nevadans from every corner of this state in opposition.

Though the debate is not new, I must say that recent developments—those that bring us here tonight—are quite alarming and raise a number of new concerns.

The very purpose for this meeting is in question. You have invited me and many good people here tonight so you and the Department of Energy can gather public comment on scientific evidence that is not complete and has not been made public. Public comment in the absence of this all-important evidence is premature and grossly irresponsible.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is not the way we do business in Nevada, and certainly this is not the way the Government should handle its affairs.

I am very disappointed that you have chosen to disregard essentially all of my offices' recommendations and decided to hold these meetings prematurely and over our reasonable objections.

We in Nevada will not stand for it.

Therefore, I would strongly advise and today formally request you schedule additional hearings over the course of the coming months across Nevada to give our citizens and their elected leaders a fair and appropriate chance to respond to your completed findings.

And, I assure you, my outrage at the lack of protocol that has permeated this process will be detailed in letters directly to Secretary Abraham and the President.

It is my sincerest hope that you recognize this error and your duty to correct it.

I don't have to remind anyone here today that it was not long ago that Nevadans and all Americans were assured that nuclear testing was safe.

It was less than 50 years ago.

Since that time, the DOE admitted that the aftermath of testing of the Hydrogen bomb at YUCCA flats caused innocent Americans to die--and that cancer benefits should be paid to the families of the dozens of men and women who were contaminated by the fallout from nuclear testing.

I am not talking about casualties of war in some distant country.

I am talking about the small farmers in neighboring Utah who tragically suffered from contaminated nuclear air.

I am talking about the Nevada workers and their families who took the government at its word and trudged to and from the test site every day with assurances that they were not in harms way.

And I am talking about generations of patriotic American families financially wiped out fighting cancer while they awaited some word of admission or assistance from their government.

The DOE, pathetically, only made that admission, just a few years ago, and it came only after years of denial and government red tape.

And just yesterday we learned for the first time that germ warfare testing…imagine…germ warfare testing...was conducted at that same test site without any knowledge whatsoever by our own Congressional delegation or my office.

With a track record like this, it is no wonder the Department of Energy lacks credibility, not only in Nevada, but also in our neighboring states.

Given the history, I trust you can understand why I view this proceeding as morally illegal, if not technically so.

It violates everything we believe in as Americans. It duplicates all that was wrong in the past and gives credence to the mistrust and cynicism harbored by so many of our people.

Our concerns are clear. This wonderful state has been ignored for far too long. We demand fairness, and we demand accountability in this process. We will not sit idly by and let the Department of Energy run roughshod over our citizens with empty promises and bad science.

We did it once, in good faith, as proud and loyal Americans. But sadly, we did not get back what we gave, and so we have learned from the past, and we are not about to repeat it.