

RE: POSSIBLE SITE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YUCCA MOUNTAIN

September 15, 2001

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Carol Hanlon
U.S. Department of Energy
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
(M/S #025)
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Dear Ms. Hanlon,

That I feel that there was a grave error in the government agreeing to take the waste at public expense, providing enormous profit to nuclear energy companies that were fostering an untried product on the public while being excused from any product liability cannot be brought into this discussion as the groundrules call for commenting on the science.

It is true, however, that few pharmaceutical or food companies would be allowed to produce and distribute a product for which the long term consequences (science) had not been adequately evaluated, much less financed by the public. And tragically across the United States, there are small entrepreneurs who have been saddled with the expense of cleaning up waste problems left by former owners/tenants of the properties they now own. Approval of the Yucca Mountain site is a direct insult to them personally and to a society that prides itself on equity.

I do question the science and do not feel that the geothermal, earthquake or underground water migration questions have been answered "beyond a reasonable doubt". I do not believe the project can meet the environmental standards of the EPA. From the documents I receive, I also believe there has been substantial manipulation of the EIS process. Thus I do not feel the site should be certified.

The agreement has placed the government in the position of being sued by those with accumulated waste since a repository has not been provided.

If there are damages to be paid from breach of contract, then those funds should be used to create local repositories by the companies that win damages, rather than continue to add to their distributive income.

The science now shows that this is possible and appropriate. It also provides a public good out of public investment.

If some of these companies choose not to continue as their subsidized profits will be exposed, the damages they "win", should be placed in a trust fund from which a local waste site could be developed.

Millions of Americans are caught up in this determination, from the 60 million Americans in 43 cities across America along the waste transportation routes to the 30 million Americans who buy agricultural food products grown in Amargosa Valley. While there are all kinds of math games that can be played here, if one takes those 90 million and looks at the \$70 billion in "studies", it works down to less than \$800/person, a certainly reasonable figure for preventative medicine.

While this experiment/study has been long and expensive, it has yielded much information that is useful to more millions.

Cannot those in decision making capacities say, "OK, the science is not conclusive, but in the interim, responsible alternatives have been identified. The costs of one repository versus a series of smaller are no longer substantial in favor of one."?

The economics of developing waste disposal as part of any community's infrastructure can not only stimulate those economies, but enhance the local decision making process. Each community will be able to decide on which nuclear waste generating entities shall operate within their exterior boundaries. There will always be those that feel that applications of nuclear medicine, etc. should not be precluded.

Nuclear waste disposal is one of the biggest questions to face all Americans in the 21st Century and many are only being introduced to it now; that the Department neither wishes nor cares about meaningful public involvement as evidenced in the compromised process bears ill for the nation in the immediate as well as long range future.

People are looking for quick and efficient disposal solutions, much as the public sought fast food service. The only quick and efficient method of nuclear waste disposal is explosion. Science teaches that the half life of this material is thousands of years, not quick. Science has also taught us that a long time diet of fast food is also fatal.

If people don't feel safe with waste in their backyards then it is empirical truth/proof (science) that it doesn't belong in ours. My mom always made me clean up my room. It's a very simple principle.

Your paragraph by paragraph response is appreciated in advance.

Sincerely,

Shayne Del Cohen
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