

Don Decker

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MR. DON DECKER: I am Don Decker, a geologist who
12 lives here in Elko, Nevada. I would like to address the
13 issue of the Yucca Mountain Project, as this hearing is
14 for.

15 The storage of high-level nuclear waste at
16 Yucca Mountain is a project which has arrived at a critical
17 time for development in the United States.

18 The Yucca Mountain Project site has been
19 studied over the past 20 years by every type of scientific
20 analysis available.

21 There are several reasons that come together
22 to justify and support the placement of the Yucca Mountain
23 Project in Nevada and to press forward with development.

24 The first issue which is of critical concern
25 is national security. Our elected officials, military
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1 leaders, and the citizenry need to step up to our
2 responsibility, become proactive in securing a long-term,
3 physically secure site for nuclear waste in our nation.

4 In light of recent terrorist activities in the
5 United States, the need for a central, secure storage
6 facility for this waste material is even more critical. We
7 do not need this material scattered over 70 sites within
8 the United States.

9 For over 50 years Nevada has welcomed,
10 approved of and benefited from research and development of
11 military and civilian uses of nuclear energy. The Yucca
12 Mountain project is simply an extension of this policy at a
13 national and state level.

14 The adjacent Nevada Test Site has been a vital
15 link in this development for over 50 years. In this same
16 time frame we have progressed to generate over 20 percent
17 of our electric power needs by nuclear sources.

18 The second point is economic diversity. The
19 State of Nevada is in a precarious position to develop
20 economic diversity and long-term economic viability. This
21 is well recognized by our elected officials, especially in
22 the numerous legislative acts which allow privatization of
23 more parcels of land in the Las Vegas Valley area. Private
24 land is always essentially to economic diversity and
25 viability.

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1 The recent terrorist activities brought to
2 light the fact that we need better economic diversity so
3 the hotel industry is not the only employer in town.

4 The Yucca Mountain Project offers the greatest

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5 opportunity for Nevada to gain a long-term stable economic
6 base on which to incubate many high-tech businesses.

7 This is a great time for the State of Nevada
8 to embrace the concept and say yes to pursue this great
9 economic opportunity.

10 The third is technology. The Yucca Mountain
11 Project can be compared to the beginnings of the Space
12 Program in the 1950s. With the Yucca Mountain Project, the
13 opportunity is on our doorstep to develop the best nuclear
14 research facilities in the world. Through this, many
15 spinoff benefits will be realized.

16 The project offers the opportunity for the
17 world-renowned Mackay School of Mines in Reno to stay on
18 the forefront of underground robotic materials handling in
19 potentially dangerous environments.

20 It is a wonderful opportunity for the great
21 State of Nevada to move forward with research and
22 underground trace element transport, monitoring and
23 mobilization, as well as just techniques of mining and
24 materials handling.

25 The state of Nevada is my heritage by choice.

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1 I have been in Nevada for over two-thirds of my life and
2 see a wonderful opportunity to stay here to develop its
3 fullest potential.

4 I would encourage our elected officials to
5 move forward with the acceptance of the Yucca Mountain
6 Project and meld it into our economic base.

7 Thank you.