

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON, DC

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Ms. Robin Sweeney  
EIS Document Manager  
Office of National Transportation  
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1551 Hillshire Dr., M/S 011  
Las Vegas, NV 89134

Dear Ms. Sweeney,

For nine years, the Air Force and Department of Defense (DOD) have participated closely with the Department of Energy (DOE) in its planning for the Yucca Mountain facility and associated transportation corridors. We look forward to continuing to support this effort and serving as a cooperating agency on the Rail Alignment Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The DOD's principal objectives regarding DOE's proposed transportation corridor and subsequent rail alignment are to ensure that Yucca Mountain transportation activities do not impinge upon military readiness testing and training activities on the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR), and that public safety is assured. It is for these reasons the DOD has consistently objected to any route proposal that passes through or intersects the NTTR.

The Air Force has consistently stated we know of no route through the NTTR that would avoid sensitive areas. This is true of the previously proposed Caliente-Chalk Mountain Corridor and any selected modified routes into portions of the NTTR. Currently, the selected corridor, Caliente, includes proposed alternatives in the vicinity of Goldfield and Scotty's Junction that intersect NTTR land. If either proposed alternative were selected, it would put the transportation routing within the weapons safety footprint of test and training munitions that are dropped daily at NTTR (and could also risk potential exposure to unexploded ordnance), or it would impinge on NTTR testing and training activities. The attributes of the NTTR, the dangerous military activities conducted there, and national security requirements do not allow us to relocate these test and training activities elsewhere.

All our military services, and many of our allies, rely on the unique capabilities of the NTTR. Each year, 75% of all live training munitions dropped by the Air Force are dropped at the NTTR. Additionally, thousands of full and sub-scale inert munitions are dropped there annually during various test and training missions on the range. The DOD and Air Force consider it essential that any rail alignment selected by DOE avoid any incursions into the NTTR in order to address both national security and public safety.

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I am confident that by working together DOD and DOE can define a rail alignment in a fashion that satisfies both DOE and DoD safety and readiness interests. Therefore, we request the DOE eliminate from further consideration all alternatives that intersect NTTR. Additionally, as a cooperating agency, the Air Force is committed to working collaboratively with the DOE throughout the EIS process.

Sincerely

  
FRED W. KUHN  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
of the Air Force (Installations)

Attachment:  
SECAF Ltr, 8 Mar 99