

Untitled

1

MR. McCracken: My name is Robert McCracken,

2 M-c-C-r-a-c-k-e-n. I don't know how much you want me to  
3 talk. I could talk for the rest of the afternoon.

4 MR. LUPTON: It's your comment.

5 MR. McCracken: I have deep roots in this  
6 area. We moved to Ely in '52 and I've since spent a lot  
7 of time in Nye County. Right now I live in Vegas. Do  
8 you need the address?

9 MR. LUPTON: Name affiliation.

10 MR. McCracken: I have a small consulting  
11 company and I also write a Nye County history column for  
12 the Pahrump newspaper. It's a monthly column. And I  
13 have a perspective on Yucca Mountain that I think most  
14 people don't have.

15 Number one, I'm a trained anthropologist,  
16 I've a Ph.D in anthropology and I was at the very first  
17 Yucca Mountain meeting in Nevada. It was like in March  
18 of 1983. The Nuclear Waste Policy Act was passed in  
19 December of 1982 and they held their physical meeting in  
20 Vegas at UNLV and I was there.

21 And at that meeting Governor Richard Bryan,  
22 you know, came in very dramatically with his entourage  
23 and announced that he was unalterably, that's the word  
24 he used, unalterably opposed to Yucca Mountain and then  
25 I left. Harry Reid, he was a Congressman at the time,

3

1 sent somebody in to say he was opposed to it, too.

2 So Nevada has played an obstructionist, the  
3 state of Nevada has played obstructionist role in Yucca

Untitled

4 Mountain from the beginning. They never had an open  
5 mind on it. When a person says that he is unalterably  
6 opposed to something, that means fact or evidence be  
7 damned. Means that he cannot, he will not change his  
8 opinion regardless.

9 Nevada's opposition to Yucca Mountain  
10 evolved over the years. Now, in my opinion, and I was  
11 working in the rural county at that time talking to  
12 people, doing oral history and things like this, doing  
13 history research. Opinion on Yucca Mountain in '83 and  
14 '84, particularly in rural Nevada, was very soft.  
15 People didn't, you know, Nevada exploded a thousand A  
16 bombs out there, you know, big deal and everything.

17 Opinion, I was living in Vegas at the time,  
18 opinion, I believe, in Vegas was soft there, too. You  
19 know, what's the big deal. But Reid and Bryan,  
20 particularly Reid over the years, used this as a  
21 political instrument to basically gain power and  
22 maintain power in Washington because he played on the  
23 fear of people.

24 I did an interview with Chick Hecht, the  
25 former senator Chick Hecht, about, oh, a year or so

4

1 before he died on Yucca Mountain. And he went, Chick  
2 went to Washington as a Nevada senator in January of  
3 1983. The act had just been passed. Reagan became  
4 president, if I remember right, '82, wasn't it?

5 And so Chick said that he was Reagan's man  
6 in the senate. And I asked Chick about, well, how did

Untitled

7 the whole thing, how did the whole opposition to Yucca  
8 Mountain evolve? And he basically said the same thing  
9 I'm saying. It was a political tool that they used.

10 And at one point I asked Chick, I said, how  
11 did Harry Reid and Richard Bryan learn, how did they  
12 know that Yucca Mountain would be such a good political  
13 issue? And Chick told me, anytime you have fear, that  
14 makes a wonderful political issue. These guys are smart  
15 and they are clever.

16 At one point probably along about 1984 I was  
17 at a meeting where Bob Loux was there, the state nuclear  
18 director and who has made a career of opposing Yucca  
19 Mountain. I said, you know, Harry Reid or Governor  
20 Bryan is on the wrong side of this Yucca Mountain issue.  
21 And he said, are you kidding? He said, this is his best  
22 issue that he has. And it just shows what I knew about  
23 politics then.

24 So Nevada has played from the very beginning  
25 an obstructionist role as far as Yucca Mountain goes.

5

1 And it's to me, to me it's a disgraceful role and it's  
2 becoming increasingly disgraceful because of the whole  
3 issue of global warming. We need nuclear power in this  
4 world because it's green. And for every nuclear power  
5 plant that's built, that's one less coal fire plant.  
6 They are not going to build any more gas fire plants  
7 that's, you know, there's not -- gas is going to be too  
8 expensive.

9 There's talking about building three coal

Untitled

10 fire plants up around Ely. They're planning 16 coal  
11 fired plants right now in Texas. There's a little talk  
12 of building a nuclear power plant here and there, but we  
13 should be building them in this country.

14 What has happened is opposition to Yucca  
15 Mountain has stalled out the whole nuclear program in  
16 the United States. So therefore, that forced them to go  
17 to natural gas and to coal. And those are, those ways  
18 of generating power that are against the health of the  
19 earth. They are global warming. They produce global  
20 warming gases, CO2 and it's a threat.

21 It is going, in the next 50 years, unless  
22 there's some really turnaround, it's a threat to every  
23 living creature on this earth right now. It's a threat  
24 to my grandchildren. It's a threat to your children and  
25 grandchildren because what kind of a world are we going

6

1 to be leaving them? And it's Harry Reid, Richard Bryan  
2 and Bob Loux and the rest of them who have played a key  
3 role in stalling out nuclear power.

4 Now, in my view nobody comes off clean on  
5 this. In the very beginning when I went to that first  
6 meeting at UNLV in spring 1983, I talked to Don Veets  
7 who was the director of the Yucca Mountain project at  
8 that time and a very so nice guy and very dependent guy.  
9 And I told Veets, I said what we need to do is to go  
10 out -- and I had no concept of global warming, you know,  
11 that wasn't even on my horizon.

12 I said what is needed is giving the

Untitled

13 opposition of the governor and so on, we need to go out  
14 and talk to people, particularly in the rural counties  
15 of Nevada, but also in Las Vegas. Because I told him it  
16 is my impression that the anti Yucca Mountain feeling is  
17 very, very soft. Because, you know, they exploded a  
18 thousand A bombs out there. You know, people say, you  
19 know, nuclear waste, big deal. That's what they were  
20 saying and that's what they were saying in Vegas  
21 basically.

22 By not doing that, and by not going out and  
23 working with the counties, treating them like basically  
24 natives, you know, hey, we're going to bring you this  
25 and we're all-knowing and everything, and we will tell

7

1 you how it's going to go. They had a lot of public  
2 meetings back in those days and I attended the biggest  
3 percentage of them for years. It was just them telling,  
4 okay, here's the schedule and here's what we're doing,  
5 never trying to work with the county.

6 Don Veets was not doing a survey work,  
7 anything to find out where people were at with Yucca  
8 Mountain. So there would have been a possibility of  
9 counter of the negativity that Bryan and Reid and the  
10 others were fostering. So that from the very beginning,  
11 the Department of Energy has not worked in a proactive  
12 way with the people of Nevada.

13 And these meetings like this are great, but  
14 there was no effort in the beginning at Yucca Mountain  
15 to employ anybody in that county. They just they

16 weren't interested.

17                   And bless his heart, Chick Hecht, some  
18 people in Tonopah called him up one day probably along  
19 in the summer of '83 and they said, how come there's no  
20 people from Nye County working on the project? Chick,  
21 he says, I'm looking into this and I'll call you back.  
22 Imagine a U.S. senator doing that now. And Chick called  
23 up DOE and said, you know, why aren't there any Nye  
24 County people? Blah, blah, blah, you know. And Chick  
25 called these people in Tonopah back the next day to, you

8

1 know, give them an explanation they are going to do,  
2 blah, blah, blah. Well, they really didn't and they  
3 never did. They built an information center and  
4 everything.

5                   Now, let's bring this up to the railroad.  
6 The railroad can be an incredible boom for -- I don't  
7 know which model you're going, are you going on the  
8 California model? Are you talking about coming down  
9 from, where is it, Hawthorn?

10                  MR. LUPTON: Those are both possibilities  
11 and that's part of the desired comment about those two  
12 possibilities.

13                  PUBLIC: Well, I can't. And me, I'm not  
14 really qualified to advise you on which route you should  
15 take. But to be proactive, you should be out working  
16 with the residents in those areas that it's going to go  
17 through. And saying, okay, what are your needs here?  
18 Maybe this is part of what your doing here, finding out

Untitled

19 needs, how can we help you.

20 This railroad and the railroad should not be  
21 just for carrying nuclear materials. It should be for,  
22 you know, Hank Records who lives out here in the  
23 Amargosa Valley, one of the pioneers here, he had had a  
24 lease on all of the Carerra mountains up there, big huge  
25 portion of it. He foresaw a huge cement plant here in

9

1 the Amargosa Valley to provide cement, concrete for  
2 Yucca Mountain and everything. So give people an  
3 economic opportunity here as far as the nuclear waste  
4 goes.

5 Okay. That can be expanded. I'll give you  
6 my vision of it. Nye County and also if you wanted to  
7 include Esmeralda County, Lincoln County, maybe Mineral  
8 County, I don't know. They can become an energy  
9 producing center for the whole west.

10 Because you can build nuclear power plants  
11 in Nye County and in the other counties which are  
12 exporting power to putting it in the western power grids  
13 basically because the western power grid is a big donut  
14 of power lines that sits over the west. And Nye County  
15 is sort of in the middle. And rural Nevada, the sort  
16 certain central is in the center and we could just be  
17 pumping all this power into the western power grid,  
18 enable the shut down of coal fire plants around the  
19 west. A shutting down some of the dams that are  
20 damaging the salmon and everything that people want to  
21 do on the west in the northwest and the west coast and

22 everythi ng.

23                   And then so that there's -- and people will  
24 be supportive because I've been out pushing the nuclear  
25 power plants in Nye County. And one county commi ssi oner

10

1 asked me, she says, where would you put a nuclear power  
2 plant? And I said, well, one of my candi dates is behind  
3 Stonewall Mountain. As you go up to the Goldfi eld grade  
4 from here that big mountain over on the right, perfect  
5 place to put some kind of nuclear faci lity. Nobody can  
6 see it. It's on federal property, you know, it's on DOE  
7 land and so on or Department of Defense land and so on.

8                   This commi ssi oner said to me, well, where  
9 would you put a power plant? Would you put one in  
10 Tonopah? And I said, absolutely. She says, how many  
11 would you put there? And I said, well, I would put at  
12 least one.

13                   And she said, how about three power plants,  
14 three nuclear power plants out on the out on the old air  
15 base there in Tonopah? I was told there's like 15,000  
16 or 20,000 acres that the BLM wants to get rid of out  
17 there. Not only do you have the old air base, but and  
18 you can put a big nuclear power faci lity on there.

19                   They have nuclear power plants now as you  
20 very well may know. General Latomic (phonetic) makes a  
21 plant that doesn't take water to cool and you can put it  
22 underground. So you won't even see them. And things  
23 like this, okay.

24                   Then we get into the whole area of



25 transportation. That's where the real future of nuclear

11

1 power is. And Yucca Mountain, it has -- this actually  
2 it's not nuclear waste, it's spent nuclear fuel. I have  
3 been told there is more, there will be more energy in  
4 the spent nuclear fuel at Yucca Mountain than currently  
5 exists in Saudi Arabia.

6 The U.S. can become a world power if we have  
7 people send their nuclear waste to us and then we  
8 reprocess, send it back to them or we build power plants  
9 to reburn this nuclear spent, this reprocessed fuel.  
10 98 percent spent nuclear fuel I'm told is plutonium and  
11 uranium. So you just clean it up, reburn it again,  
12 clean it up again, reburn. It takes special plants to  
13 do it, but we could have a huge production facility.  
14 Moreover, this is an incredible place for solar and  
15 wind.

16 And just today it occurred to me, you know,  
17 they are shutting down the Tonopah test range in a year  
18 or two. That's the big test range up around Tonopah.  
19 Perfect place to put nuclear power plants, perfect place  
20 to put huge wind and solar facility so that we become a  
21 huge energy generating center here, and at the same time  
22 we're solving the spent nuclear fuel problem. And we're  
23 helping to, we're doing our part to save the earth. And  
24 meanwhile, it brings incredible prosperity to this area.

25 I've done an analysis of the economic

12

Untitled

1 impact, it's my figures, of the three Palo Verde plants.  
2 I think they are thousand or 1200 megawatts plants,  
3 three of them. Each one of those plants pays  
4 \$14 million a year in property taxes to Maricopa County.

5 Well, imagine if you had a power plant, a  
6 nuclear power plant somewhere here in the Amargosa  
7 Valley, they are paying 14 million here just in property  
8 taxes. The average job at the Palo Verde plant is  
9 60,000 a year. That's the average pay. High paying  
10 jobs and they are paying taxes.

11 It's become an island of the prosperity. As  
12 the world begins to -- our way of life is going to  
13 deconstruct, make no mistake about it, in my view. Oil,  
14 oil will go to a hundred dollars a barrel and things are  
15 going to get tight and there's going to be certain  
16 amount of chaos out there.

17 We could be there. Here in this area could  
18 be this huge energy generating center that we could be  
19 pumping out energy to be used all over the west, as well  
20 as solving nuclear waste problem and helping the  
21 greenhouse gas problem. So that's my pitch in a  
22 nutshell.

23 MR. LUPTON: Thank you, sir. Always a  
24 pleasure. Certainly I encourage you to visit with  
25 various people talk, to the different people who know

13

1 about the different issues. Lee Morton -- excuse me,  
2 Lee Bishop is here and I recommend you talk to

Untitled

3 Mr. Bishop about the railing.

4 MR. McCracken: I also have a web site which  
5 is, I don't spend a lot of money on it or anything, but  
6 it's Nye County Sleeping Giant dot.com and it's their  
7 vision of the role of nuclear power and other forms of  
8 energy in Nye County. Turn it into a real island of  
9 prosperity.

10 MR. Lupton: Thank you, sir.