

3 JONI EASTLEY: Thanks for providing a lecturn
4 that makes me look tall. Appreciate that. Good afternoon,
5 my name is Joni Eastley. I'm Vice Chair of the Nye County
6 Board of Commissioners.

7 [As you are well aware, Nye is the site county
8 for the proposed repository at Yucca Mountain. As
9 commissioners, we are responsible for developing county
10 policy as it relates to this project, then communicating
11 that policy to our nuclear waste repository office for
12 implementation. I appreciate DOE's scheduling one of
13 these hearings in Nye County. Thank you very much.

14 Nye is a cooperating agency on the supplement
15 to the EIS, and we're pleased to have had an opportunity
16 to work with DOE to ensure that our interests and
17 concerns are included in that document.

18 Although we reserve the right to make
19 additional comments, I don't anticipate -- other than
20 what my colleague is going to say after I speak -- any
21 formal comments beyond those that I will make today.

22 Nye County will, however, submit formal
23 comments for the record on the Rail Alignment EIS, and
24 we anticipate doing that on or before January 10th,
25 2008.

First, I want to say that Nye County is the
2 site county for this repository. That decision was made
3 long ago, and that decision was made by others.
4 Nye County was not consulted, and we had no say in its
5 selection.

6 But regardless of being excluded from the
7 decision-making process, as elected officials, we have
8 pragmatically chosen to actively and constructively
9 engage DOE in this process.

10 We are firm in our resolve concerning this.
11 And until the law changes, if it ever does, we believe
12 that we need to do everything in our power to represent
13 our citizens by providing the oversight that is needed
14 to do four things.

15 The first is to protect the health, safety,
16 economic well-being and quality of life of our
17 residents. Second, we want to provide the oversight
18 needed to protect the environment.

19 Third, ensure that the repository operates
20 safely and successfully. And, fourth, ensure that
21 whatever transportation system is put in place operates
22 safely and serves to advance opportunities for economic
23 development throughout the county.

24 The Nuclear Waste Policy Act was signed into
25 law in 1982. It was amended in 1987 to make

1 Yucca Mountain the only site characterized. And then

2 Congress formally designated the site in 2002.

3 My colleagues and I refuse to ignore this law
4 and lazily assume that the State will prevail in its
5 opposition to this project. It would be dangerous and
6 irresponsible not to constructively engage DOE during
7 this process when we have so much to lose by not doing
8 so.

9 The various political leaders of both parties

10 insist that decisions about Yucca Mountain should be
11 based on sound science, and we agree with that. Through
12 its independent scientific oversight program, Nye County
13 has produced approximately 30 million dollars worth of
14 studies, and what we have observed is that this is not
15 only a technically feasible project, but that it can be
16 done safely.

17 In fact, we have reason to believe that the
18 environmental impact of nuclear weapons tests at the
19 Nevada Test Site, which, I'd like to point out to
20 everyone, is also wholly-contained within the borders of
21 Nye County, up gradient from Yucca Mountain, puts
22 Nye County citizens, at least in the relative nearer
23 term, at a much greater risk than this repository ever
24 will.

25 I firmly believe that as long as this is a
1 retrievable repository, as opposed to the dump that it

2 has been so commonly referred to lately, that we would
3 all be better served if it was viewed as a natural
4 energy reserve and its contents as a resource.

5 As I noted previously, Nye is a cooperating
6 agency in the Supplemental EIS. Of particular note in
7 our display that you can see in the back of the room
8 here is a news release that announces the results of a
9 rail economic study suggesting that west central Nevada
10 could actually realize significant economic benefit from
11 the construction of the railroad designed to serve the
12 repository.

13 Also included is a position paper prepared by
14 the Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization
15 that sets forth their views of how important
16 Yucca Mountain is to them in the context of energy
17 independence and sufficiency, the nuclear renaissance,
18 and energy policy in general.

19 As can be seen through these documents,
20 Yucca Mountain does not stand alone in the arenas of
21 energy policy and economic growth. Many reputable
22 experts and experienced managers and planners in similar
23 areas see the value of this project.

24 In the end, Nye County expects that the people
25 who will ultimately work at Yucca Mountain will live in

1 Nye County as opposed to riding busses to and from

2 Las Vegas, which is done now. And when and where it
3 makes sense, we also believe that the businesses and
4 industries associated with the repository should be
5 located right here in Nye County.

6 Finally, consider the irony that at one time
7 Nevada's political leadership actually endorsed this
8 project and even attempted to segregate the
9 Yucca Mountain site in a separate county. I'm sure you
10 all remember what that was, Bullfrog County.

11 In the context of contemporary politics where
12 responsible government would have us find solutions as
13 opposed to political opportunities, it can be certainly
14 said that we were for it before we were against it.

15 As I said earlier, the law is what it is, and
16 until it changes or the State prevails in the courts, we

17 intend to remain actively and constructively engaged
18 with DOE until the very end.

19 The time has come for -- to either advance or
20 terminate this program based on its merits - but only on
21 its merits. The NRC has been charged with that
22 responsibility. And regardless of one's position, even
23 for or against, we need to see an end to the stalling
24 tactics and politicizing of science and bring this
25 project to a completion.] Thank you.