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Letter: A triumph of hysteria over rationalism here

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[No other issue demonstrates the triumph of hysteria over rationalism in Nevada better than Yucca Mountain.

Billions spent on studies to predict if, over tens of thousands of years, occasional rainfall in the desert might work its way through hundreds of feet of earth, slowly drip on stainless steel casks, eventually corrode and leak, then matriculate ever so slowly into the groundwater.

Yucca, of course, is next door to the test site where nuclear weapons were detonated in air and underground for years. Rather like spending a thousand dollars on studies to predict when your \$10 faucet might leak, while ignoring thousands of gallons rushing by from a broken water main.

We wring our hands worrying that a train derailment could spill armored casks of nuclear materials. Take an hour to watch the long lines of 50,000-gallon chlorine tank cars passing through "Griffin's Gulch" (train trench) every day. The biggest problem after a derailment will be dealing with the dead and injured from the chlorine gas clouds after those tank cars split open. Next will be cleaning up all the other nonnuclear hazardous waste spilled from un-reinforced containers.

Common sense: smooth and refreshing! Give it a try, Nevada.]

Jim Chase, Reno