



Mark Donham <markkris@earthlink.net> on 01/09/2008 05:47:01 PM

Please respond to Mark Donham <markkris@earthlink.net>

**RRR000935**

To: EIS\_Office@ymp.gov

cc:

Subject: Yucca EIS comments

LSN: Relevant - Not Privileged

User Filed as: Excl/AdminMgmt-14-4/QA:N/A

Dear DOE,

re: the Draft Repository SEIS, Draft Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS, and Draft Rail Alignment EIS

These are the comments of the Regional Association of Concerned Environmentalists (RACE) on the Draft EIS for Yucca Mt. proposal for long term storage of irradiated fuel rods. RACE has a long time interest in nuclear issues, and has been involved in issues surrounding the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion plant for decades.

- 1 [ 1. DOE should extend the public comment period by 60 additional days, given that these environmental impact documents are a foot thick altogether. ]
- 2 [ 2. Shipping tens of thousands of high-level radioactive waste trucks, trains, and barges through 45 states and the District of Columbia risks severe accidents and terrorist attacks. This could release catastrophic amounts of deadly radioactivity in major population centers. These waste transports would represent potential Mobile Chernobyls and dirty bombs on wheels rolling past the homes of millions of Americans. Each truck cask of irradiated nuclear fuel would contain 350,000 curies of radioactive cesium and strontium, or about 20 to 30 times the amount of these harmful fission products released by the Hiroshima atomic bomb. Every dedicated train hauling three or four rail casks would contain more radioactive cesium-137 than the total amount released during the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe. DOE must integrate into its Yucca Mountain transport analysis its own proposals, under the Bush administration's "Global Nuclear Energy Partnership" (GNEP), for waste imports from overseas, and waste shipments to reprocessing (plutonium extraction) centers in the U.S. before waste shipments to Yucca for final disposal. DOE must also analyze the increased transport risks from its proposal to nearly double the amount of waste to be buried at Yucca to 130,000 metric tons - which on its face violates the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, as amended, which limits the amount of waste that could be buried at the first repository to 70,000 metric tons, at least until a second repository is opened in another state ]
- 3 [ 3. All of the land at the Yucca Mountain dump project is within the treaty lands of the Western Shoshone Indian Nation, as affirmed by the "Peace and Friendship" Treaty of Ruby Valley, signed by the U.S. government in 1863. Treaties are declared by the U.S. Constitution to be the supreme law of the land, equal in stature to the Constitution itself. As the Western Shoshone Nation opposes radioactive waste dumping at its sacred Yucca Mountain, where traditional ceremonies have continued to be conducted right up to recent years, DOE should terminate the Yucca Mountain Project for this reason alone. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination ruled in recent years that the Yucca Mountain Project represents a human rights violation against the indigenous Western Shoshone Nation, and has urged the U.S. government to cease and desist its activities there. The Yucca Mountain dump proposal represents blatant environmental racism, as stated by Ian ]

Zabarte of the Western Shoshone National Council at DOE's recent Las Vegas and Washington, D.C. hearings. ]

4 [ A federal judge, ruling against DOE and in favor of the State of Nevada over DOE's illegal use of water at the Yucca Mountain Project, recently concluded that DOE either is engaging in "busy work" at the site (wasting not only water, but also Nuclear Waste Fund monies), or else it misled Congress and the President in 2002 that site characterization had concluded at the site when DOE announced the site suitable for a high-level radioactive waste dump. The Nuclear Waste Policy Act, as amended, required DOE to apply for its license application on Oct. 23, 2002, assuming that DOE's site suitability determination would mean that DOE must be extremely close to ready to submit a complete license application. Yet, incredibly, over five years later, DOE has still not submitted its license application. DOE has known for over a decade that rainwater percolates relatively quickly through the proposed burial site, and risks fast corrosion of the waste containers that would be buried there. In fact, DOE scandalously did away with its own Site Suitability Guidelines that would have disqualified the site for this reason from any further consideration, just before declaring the site suitable. DOE should admit to Congress and the President that the site is in fact not suitable. Resources should go toward providing additional security for the sites where the rods are currently stored. ]

5 [ 5. The National Academy of Science reported recently, in its Seventh Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (BEIR) report, that any dose of radiation, no matter how small, carries a health risk, and that in fact those risks at low doses are disproportionately high, significantly higher than previously reported. There are significant cumulative effects from all of the DOE sites, such as Paducah, Hanford, Oak Ridge, etc, which have released many many curies of radioactivity in the last half century. This needs to be analyzed and disclosed. ]

6 [ 9. DOE should much more thoroughly analyze the negative impact on property values along all road, rail, and waterway routes across the continental United States that would be used to ship wastes to Yucca. Courts, juries, and socio-economic studies have found that property values decrease significantly near declared radioactive waste transport routes. DOE must identify in detail all routes it plans to use for shipping wastes to Yucca before proceeding any further with its attempt to obtain a license to build and operate the dump, and should hold hearings in every state thus impacted. ]

7 [ We urge the DOE to withdraw the Yucca Mt. proposal and to put those resources into improving the current storage facilities which are on site. We also need to quick manufacturing these highly dangerous materials. ]

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