

17 CHARLOTTE OMOHUNBDRO: The scope of the
18 EPA's environmental assessment at Yucca Mountain is
19 too limited, both in scope and in duration. It does
20 not consider that the environmental impact of the
21 facility over time will affect an enormous
22 geographical area and the people who inhabit it.

23 After the last EPA hearings, the news
24 coverage on Channel 8 quoted the EPA as stating that
25 the rise in radiation levels in Las Vegas after

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1 shipping high-level toxicity radioactive waste
2 materials would be no higher than in Denver,
3 Colorado. That's not at all reassuring to those of
4 us who are aware of the radioactive contamination in
5 Colorado after the fires at Rocky Flats and
6 mishandling of transported radioactive waste to the
7 Lowry Landfill or of the subsequent unsuccessful EPA
8 Superfund attempts at remediation.

9 Dr. Helen Caldicott, the founder of the
10 Physicians for Special Responsibilities, stated that
11 she believes that the Denver metropolitan area is
12 uninhabitable because of the plutonium contamination
13 from those fires at Rocky Flats, which were virtually
14 unreported in the local press.

15 Our local news coverage here in Las Vegas
16 failed to disclose the results of the grand jury
17 investigation of the city of Denver's mishandling of
18 the two sites. That occurred as the result of the

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19 city's partnership with Waste Management, Inc., which
20 was found to have been associated with organized
21 crime in other parts of the country.

22 In addition to the plutonium
23 contamination from Rocky Flats, Titan Missile
24 Factory, and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal dumped at the
25 Lowry Landfill, which is now classified as an EPA

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1 Superfund site, it has been investigated for flushing
2 radioactive waste into public sewage systems, which
3 rerouted it into irrigation for public parks and
4 recreation areas in Denver, and for agricultural
5 irrigation. Note, the half-life of PU239 is over
6 24,000 years, and the half-life of U238 is around 4.5
7 billion years.

8 We are all aware in this part of the
9 country of the failed legal attempts by NTSW's and
10 Utah Downwinders to seek compensation from the
11 Department of Energy and Defense for medical
12 expenses, loss of life, and loss of property from
13 radioactive contamination after the nuclear bomb
14 testing at the Nevada Test Site in the 1950s and
15 1960s. The majority of the awards made by lower
16 courts were lost on appeal in the federal courts. It
17 seems the federal government can't be sued after it
18 made misleading statements about the safety of
19 exposure to radioactivity, even when the exposures
20 resulted in fatalities to civilians.

21 Information about the types of diseases
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22 and fatal illnesses that can be expected from
23 exposure to the lethal toxins that will be stored at
24 Yucca Mountain is nearly impossible for the public to
25 find. Information from the routes of contamination,

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1 primarily the groundwater seepage through earthquake
2 faults has been falsified by the federal government,
3 and the corrections have not been made easily
4 available to the civilian public, whose taxes are
5 being used to build the repository and the rail lines
6 for shipping through earthquake country. We have no
7 public health services which will provide diagnosis
8 and treatment in the event of spills or other types
9 of contamination. There is no evacuation plan for
10 the city of Las Vegas, to my knowledge.

11 The state of general preparedness for
12 disasters at Yucca Mountain is probably similar to
13 that of the reactor at Chernobyl in Byelorussia. The
14 differences are that the amount of material at
15 Chernobyl, which went critical, was a tiny fraction
16 of the amount scheduled for deposit at Yucca
17 Mountain, and the population in the immediate
18 surrounding area was a tiny fraction of the
19 population in Southern Nevada, California, Utah, and
20 Arizona.

21 The environmental impact assessments
22 conducted by the EPA for Yucca Mountain do not take
23 these facts into consideration. Nor does it take
24 into consideration that it has been putting the cart

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25 before the horse for about six decades when it comes

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1 to the use of nuclear facilities. If proper research
2 into the treatment of nuclear waste to render it
3 harmless after use had already been done, we wouldn't
4 have to worry about the lethal effects of accidents
5 for the civilian population or about the possibility
6 of sabotage by terrorists. We need another Manhattan
7 project for that research, and until it is conducted,
8 we shouldn't be producing more waste. We need for
9 radioactive waste to be deactivated, not stored.
10 Charlotte Omohundro, *****.