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Reno Public Meeting
October 4, 2001

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PHILLIP SALERNO: It's Phillip Salerno,

21 S-a-l-e-r-n-o, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Sparks.

22 I was asked to be here this afternoon to give
23 testimony for Governor Kenny Guinn. He wanted me to read
24 this for the record.

25 "Good afternoon. On behalf of the citizens

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1 of the State of Nevada, I would like to
2 welcome you here this afternoon and hope
3 my remarks and remarks of many concerned
4 Nevadans who will speak later will be
5 taken in the spirit in which they're
6 intended.

7 "This is honest, constructive,
8 impassioned public input on an issue that
9 is paramount to the health and safety of
10 every Nevadan and every American whose
11 home, school or place of business sits
12 along the proposed paths of the deadliest
13 substance on earth that, if the DOE has
14 its way, will take to Nevada.

15 "This debate is not new. As many of you
16 know, Nevada's fight to keep the nuclear
17 waste repository from coming to Yucca

18 Mountain has raged for nearly 20 years.
19 Unlike many of the policy battles that
20 grip Washington, however, this fight
21 transcends party affiliation,
22 socioeconomic classes, race or gender and
23 galvanizes Nevadans from every corner of
24 the state in opposition.
25 "Though the debate is not new, I must say

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1 recent development, those that bring us
2 here tonight, are quite alarming and
3 raise a number of new concerns. The very
4 purpose of this meeting is in question.
5 You have invited me and many good people
6 here tonight so you and the Department of
7 Energy can gather public input on
8 scientific evidence that is not complete
9 and has not been made public.
10 "Public comment in the absence of this
11 all-important evidence is premature and
12 grossly irresponsible. Ladies and
13 gentlemen, this is not the way we do
14 business in Nevada, and certainly this is

15 not the way the government should handle
16 its affairs.

17 "I am very disappointed you have chosen
18 to disregard essentially all of my
19 office's recommendations and decided to
20 hold these meetings prematurely and over
21 our reasonable objections. We in Nevada
22 will not stand for it.

23 "Therefore, I would strongly advise and
24 today formally request you schedule
25 additional hearings over the course of

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1 the coming months across Nevada and give
2 our citizens and their elected leaders a
3 fair and appropriate chance to respond to
4 your completed findings. And I assure
5 you, my outrage at the lack of protocol
6 that has permeated this process will be
7 detailed in letters directly to Secretary
8 Abraham and the President. It is my
9 sincerest hope that you recognize this
10 error and your duty to correct it.

11 "I don't have to remind anyone here today

12 that it was not long ago that Nevadans
13 and all Americans were assured nuclear
14 testing was safe. It was less than 50
15 years ago. Since that time the DOE has
16 admitted that the aftermath of testing of
17 the hydrogen bomb at Yucca Flats caused
18 innocent Americans to die and that cancer
19 benefits should be paid to the families
20 of the dozens of men and women who were
21 contaminated by the fallout from nuclear
22 testing.

23 "I am not talking about casualties of war
24 in some distant country. I am talking
25 about the small farmers in neighboring

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1 Utah who tragically suffered from
2 contaminated nuclear air. I am talking
3 about the Nevada workers and their
4 families who took government at its word
5 and trudged to and from the test site
6 every day with assurances that they were
7 not in any way in harm's way. I am
8 talking about generations of patriotic

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9 American families financially wiped out,
10 fighting cancer while they await word of
11 admission or assistance from their
12 government.

13 "The DOE pathetically only made that
14 admission just a few years ago, and it
15 came only after years of denial and
16 government red tape, and just yesterday
17 we have learned for the first time that
18 germ warfare testing -- imagine, germ
19 warfare testing -- was conducted at that
20 same test site without any knowledge
21 whatsoever by our own Congressional
22 delegation or my office.

23 "With a track record like this, it is no
24 wonder the Department of Energy lacks
25 credibility, not only in Nevada, but also

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1 in our neighboring states. Given the
2 history, I trust you can understand why I
3 view this proceeding as morally illegal,
4 if not technically so. It violates
5 everything we believe in as Americans.

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6 It duplicates all that was wrong in the
7 past and gives credence to the mistrust
8 and cynicism harbored by so many of our
9 people.
10 "Our concerns are clear. This wonderful
11 state has been ignored for far too long.
12 We demand fairness, we demand
13 accountability in the process. We will
14 not sit idly by and let the Department of
15 Energy run roughshod over our citizens
16 with empty promises and bad science. We
17 did it once in good faith as proud and
18 loyal Americans, but, sadly, we did not
19 get back what we gave, and so we have
20 learned from the past and we are not
21 about to repeat it."
22 Governor Kenny C. Guinn."
23 Thank you.