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Santa Fe, NM. 87506
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Secretary Of Energy , Abraham Spencer
1000 Independence Ave.
Washington DC 20585

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to oppose the plan to use Yucca Mt. in Nevada for nuclear waste storage. I believe this would be an unsafe and irresponsible choice on the part of the federal government for the following reasons:

1. There are over 30 earthquake faults that run through this mountain, and an earthquake in 1992 has already caused significant damage to the site.
2. Groundwater flow through this area is already showing contamination from previous nuclear testing; flow through the mountain is quick; combining this with the faults and the earthquake history makes this a very inappropriate area geologically.

3. Buried waste is harder to monitor than aboveground storage. Above-ground retrievable storage on the sites where the waste is produced not only allows for monitoring of it, but also avoids the hazards involved in shipping nuclear waste. It is already in someone's "back yard"-- moving it through thousands of others' to someone else's makes little sense. While I personally oppose all nuclear energy production, I believe that the dangers are reduced by storing waste on site.

Buried errors are also harder to detect and correct. Storage in Yucca Mountain is a plan that not only ignores geology, but one that creates multiple opportunities for human error-- in transportation, in design of the storage facility, in monitoring of deeply buried waste.

4. Just because something is already in progress does not mean it should be continued. As any beginner in decision analysis knows, "sunk money doesn't count". One analyzes a decision at all points in its process based on current knowledge and current evidence of probable outcomes. A bad decision can be canceled at any point before completion of its trajectory. As soon as it becomes evident that a decision was unwise, then more is saved by stopping its process than by continuing. Long-term vision is called for, not short-term. Long-term, storage in Yucca Mountain is likely to cause far worse problems.

5. Although I have no evidence that Indian lands, culture and religion are of great interest or concern to this administration, I will nonetheless point out that this mountain is sacred to the Western Shoshone people. If all people in this country are to have true religious freedom, then the government should not be desecrating sacred sites. The fact

that the area is sacred to religious minority, not the majority, is irrelevant. The original idea behind religious freedom in this country was motivated by the need, among other things, for the protection of religious minorities from oppression by the majority (at the time, of the American Revolution oppressed religious minorities included Quakers, Catholics, Baptists, Jews, and anyone who was not Anglican). Putting something so poisonous into something that is holy to any group of people is wrong. It is like suggesting to the Christian community that the national cathedral should be a nuclear waste site. Or perhaps it is more like taking the synagogue in a small, remote town and using it for a waste site, saying that these people don't matter since there aren't many of them and anyway they aren't part of the majority religion of the this country. But of course, Christians and Jews are large voting blocks; this government is careful not to interfere with their religious expression, and would never think of destroying a sacred place for either of these groups. But a very small religious minority group, the ones most in need of constitutional protection, who are also a small racial minority, are targeted for this sort of treatment.

I live on Pojoaque Pueblo near Los Alamos National Laboratories in New Mexico. With this site, the Nevada test site, the uranium mines and the not so distant history of the exploitation of Navajo and Pueblo workers there, I think that Indian people of the southwest have been exposed to enough radioactive contamination, and it's time to stop.

Reliance on nuclear energy is short-sighted; it has obviously created a thus-far insoluble problem of radioactive waste whose half life exceeds all of our lives and that of the next generations. It is a problem that will outlive us all, and it is a moral wrong to future generations to continue to create a problem(nuclear waste) for which we have no solution. Continuing to use more of and promote further development of energy sources that have already proven to cause problems, rather than promoting conservation and clean, renewable sources, is illogical. Drilling for more oil and building more nuclear plants is like dealing with being obese by buying bigger pants. We are, as a nation, energy-obese. We "eat" too much, and of the wrong stuff. We need to cut back and change our diet, rather than fantasize irrationally that doing more of the same polluting, destructive behaviors will somehow solve a problem that they have created.

Meanwhile, store its waste near those who think nuclear energy is important and valuable. Store it near the policy-makers, the people in power. I encourage policy-makers in Washington DC to invite it into their back yard, not ours. Are their lives and health more valuable than ours? I think not. Is any individual in this country less important or valuable than another? I think we are created equal. The people of the southwest have already had an unequal and excessive exposure to nuclear-related health hazards. Yucca Mountain waste storage would add to this already unfair burden. Enough is enough.

A voter,
Patricia Kearney

Pojoaque Pueblo, New Mexico

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