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23 SENATOR ENSIGN: Thank you for taking the
24 time to be here. I know it's part of the law, and I
25 know you have tough jobs to do tonight, but this is
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1 very important that we not only hear from the
2 congressional delegation, but from the real people in
3 the state of Nevada. Those are real faces that are in
4 that audience, with real families who are very
5 concerned about the quality of life that we have in our
6 state, and feel that that quality of life is being
7 threatened by one of the deadliest substances on the
8 planet today.

9 One of the reasons that we object and people
10 in the state of Nevada object to the Department of
11 Energy and the way that it's conducted, this site
12 characterization is typified by what's going on right
13 now. Final characterization in these public hearings
14 are being held before we have a final environmental
15 impact statement. That was one of the documents
16 Governor Guinn was referring to earlier and why we as a
17 delegation are outraged by this. We think it's a wrong
18 process, and we feel that it may be technically legal,

19 it is certainly not a morally right way to handle these
20 hearings.

21 The people of the state of Nevada have been
22 looking at the DOE and looking at the way that they've
23 been going forward. The science on this is not an
24 exact science. There's been a lot of controversy as
25 far as the scientists are concerned. And all the DOE
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1 scientists seem to be saying one thing, but yet outside
2 scientists seem to be giving people of the state of
3 Nevada quite different information. The other thing is
4 is that right now, the Department of Energy's Inspector
5 General is investigating a serious conflict of interest
6 between the DOE and one of its contractors, Winston and
7 Strom, who have been simultaneously representing the
8 DOE and the leading proponent of moving waste to the
9 state of Nevada, the Nuclear Energy Institute. Winston
10 and Strom, who has advocated for waste storage without
11 proper environmental safeguards, is now advising the
12 DOE on the highly technical licensing application,
13 which goes to the heart of whether Yucca Mountain could
14 shield Nevadans from harmful radiation.

15 I think it is outrageous for the DOE to move

16 forward before the IG has at least finished its
17 investigation.

18 The other thing I want to talk about is the
19 whole idea of whether we even need Yucca Mountain in
20 the first place. See, I believe it is a bad idea to
21 bring nuclear waste to the state of Nevada, not only
22 for the people of Nevada, but also for the United
23 States as a whole. We have this substance that, as
24 Senator Reid was talking about, scientists have agreed
25 that is absolutely safe to leave on site in their dry
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1 cask storage units, take them out of the cooling pours
2 they're in now, put them in dry cask storage, which
3 several sites around the country are currently doing.
4 It's the cheapest thing to do, and that storage is good
5 for 100 years. During that period of time, we ought to
6 take some of the money, instead of building Yucca
7 Mountain, and invest it in what's called recycling
8 technology. There's -- you can call it pyroprocessing,
9 you can call it accelerator transmutation. There's
10 lots of different terms and different processes that
11 are being looked at, but the bottom line is we have
12 time to look at new technology for recycling this

13 waste.

14 Yucca Mountain, which was originally supposed
15 to cost a lot less than what the current estimates are
16 going to cost, the cots have skyrocketed. People are
17 talking now somewhere close to \$60 billion, which is
18 the most expensive construction project in the history
19 of the world. This is wasted money, and it is money
20 that, frankly, we're going to bury a very valuable
21 resource. These nuclear fuel rods, which contain
22 radioactive elements that will last 200,000 years,
23 instead of trying to bury these things some place,
24 which we don't have the technology as human beings to
25 do that, instead of doing that, we can convert it, via

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1 these new processes, that will produce huge amounts of
2 clean energy. And people are concerned about global
3 warming and the various things that fossil fuels cause.
4 We ought to be looking at these recycling technology,
5 because we'll get a lot of clean energy which, also
6 will help pay for the cost of developing this new
7 technology.

8 We've been working on getting funding for
9 some of this new reprocessing. It's not reprocessing.

10 It's recycling technology, and that's where the
11 Department of Energy should be putting its focus. Los
12 Alamos, Argon Laboratories is doing some of that, but
13 instead of investing all these scientists' efforts from
14 the DOE into just figuring out whether Yucca Mountain
15 is safe, we ought to put all our efforts in to finding
16 recycling technology, which I believe will not only be
17 the best thing for the state of Nevada, because Nevada
18 won't end up with nuclear waste, but it will also be
19 the best thing for the country, because we'll end up
20 with a lot of clean energy.

21 And I want to thank you for allowing us to
22 testify, and we're going to turn it over now to our
23 house delegation who has been fighting tremendous
24 effort with us in this battle to keep nuclear waste out
25 of our state.