

65 FR 39206
June 23, 2000

(13)

My Personal Statement on the Proposed Nuclear Storage Facility in Utah

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Little America Hotel – Salt Lake City, Utah - 7.27.2000

My name is Hermann A. Peine and I appreciate the opportunity to share my story and concerns. I am a licensed Psychologist and Marriage and Family Counselor in the State of Utah. I immigrated here at the age of seven from Germany in January of 1952. My widowed mother recalled wondering if she had been out of her mind to leave Germany and come to this desolate area. She recalled that for the last several hundred miles of our journey all that she had seen were frozen Jackrabbits splattered on the icy roads. But, Mother had left Germany for a reason, for after the war she had found my baby blanket frozen to the wall and determined that there had to be a safer and better place to raise her child. Her hopes were met by a warm reception from residents of the then very rural community of Farmington. Later we moved to Salt Lake and I graduated from West High School and received my Ph.D. from the University of Utah in 1971. Apart from work periods in Switzerland, England and Michigan I have called Utah my home for 50 years and have lived up and down the Wasatch Front.

I have always had a feeling of security every time I flew or drove back into the valleys of the Great Basin. I have also been impressed that "safety" has also been a dominant theme for friends who chose to make Utah their home, migrating here from all parts of the country.

As an adjunct clinical professor at the University of Utah, I have been teaching among other things, a course entitled "The Psychology of Human Living Spaces". The class explores issues related to environmental patterns eliciting both positive and negative reactions from people. Stress, anxiety, depression, and despair dominate the negative domain and are often human emotional reactions to environmental stressors. Hope, security and having a feeling of safety

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are the opposites. Life for me in Utah has been good. Mother's hopes were fulfilled. What of the future?

My family and I will soon be moving to Cyprus with a Fulbright Scholar award in conflict resolution between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The Cyprus situation includes a mutual community distrust of the other side and taught to each side's children as a cultural norm. In Israel, another conflict we are more familiar with, one certainly feels the tension in the air. The stress effects on children are well documented and are not positive. Continued feelings of insecurity on both sides have far reaching outcomes on families and especially children and reach far into the future.

When we return to Utah in a year how will we feel for our safety? Approve this proposed nuclear waste storage facility at our doorsteps and I know my family's response. Imagine a scenario where a bomb is dropped on the storage containers and the resultant stress on the community. The fear engendered by even imagining such a possibility may be as real as an actual happening. According to Ukranian investigators, stress on children from the Chernobyl disaster and its consequences is of more serious concern than cancer or chromosome damage. The disruption in people's lives combined with radiation phobia has lead to real diseases including chronic bronchitis, digestive-system problems, and hypertension, and may have compromised the immune system. Many Chernobyl cleanup liquidators received little radiation but presumed they were afflicted with the resultant stress leading to increased suicides and alcohol abuse. Some of the "hot" children, who were called "fireflies" and shunned by their peers, will never recover from the emotional trauma.

One thing I have learned living in Utah is that we suffer embarrassment well. It seems every type of scam devised by man can find a home in Utah. Utah's are sometimes viewed as well educated and well-traveled provincials who tend to take our Utah culture wherever we go because it makes us feel secure and we like it. We also tend not to be a hostile people. I think Utah's reacted patiently to being downwind guinea pigs for the Atomic testing in Nevada. I

believe we rationalized away sheep dying from toxic chemicals in the west desert and continue to be patient with toxic wastes possibly drifting to populated areas from industry located on the Great Salt Lake or a chemical detoxification in Tooele. The pollution created by Geneva Steel and Kennettcote Copper is beyond dispute, and because they are trying to clean up their act and are big employers in the State we shouldn't complain too much, or should we?

The addition of the world's largest nuclear dump with a life span of 10,000 years will do nothing to lessen our discomfort. Environmental patterns leading to human distress are located all around the world. Utah has its fair share. The human psychological toll is immense. During the cold war psychologists set up a special program to deal with children's fear of nuclear war. One accident with the proposed nuclear waste storage facility will lead to increased fears for hundreds, if not thousands of Utah children and families and the health risks associated with that.

The process of this proposal also haunts me. This nuclear waste storage facility should at least be a mile below ground at Yucca Mountain, Nevada or some viable alternative. It should not be above ground on the Goshute Indian Reservation run by private enterprise. I find it disturbing how few of the States residents know about what is being proposed. I am not a very paranoid person by nature, but it appears to me that not enough voices are presently speaking out for the psychological and physical welfare of Utah families. The pending decision may well effect the lives of hundreds of generations and must not be taken at this time with such an ill-informed public. The far-reaching ramifications of building such a facility may only play out physically in the distant future, but it negatively impacts the emotional safety and quality of life of living in Utah today.

My mother's dream was to locate in the safety of these mountains. She wanted that dream for my children, my children's children, and for myself. Personal perceptions of being at increased risk diminishes that dream. Please do not allow this to happen.

Thank you.