

Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians

Skull Valley Reservation
P.O. Box 150
Grantsville, Utah 84029
Office: (801) 474-0535
Fax: (801) 474-0534



June 15, 1998

Dr. Edward Y. Shum
Environmental Project Manager
Spent Fuel Licensing Section
Spent Fuel Project Office
Office of Nuclear Material Safety & Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

RE: **Written Comments: Scoping Meeting for Preparation of an EIS for the Private Fuel Storage Facility**

Dr. Shum:

As recommended at the Scoping Meeting on June 2, 1998, I am enclosing written comments to be considered by the Staff.

Thank you,

Leon D. Bear
Leon D. Bear, Chairman
Executive Committee

LDB/bbs

Enc: Prepared Statement
Leon Bear

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF LEON D. BEAR, CHAIRMAN OF THE
SKULL VALLEY BAND OF GOSHUTE INDIANS

SCOPING CONFERENCE

June 2, 1998

The following is filed as a supplement to my oral statement made at the Scoping Conference in Salt Lake City on June 2, 1998, in response to concerns expressed by certain individuals with respect to the impact of the Private Fuel Storage facility on the Skull Valley Band's cultural heritage. The Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians have existed for thousands of years and have lived in the area containing our reservation. Our people chose not to migrate with the group that moved to Ibapah when the U.S. Government created a land base approximately 70 miles to the west of us. As traditionalists, we chose to stay with our families in Skull Valley; our wishes were recognized by the U.S. Government, and by executive orders issued in 1917 and 1918, the Skull Valley Reservation was created. There, we have lived and raised our families and carried on our traditional government. Our land and our values are very important to us and form the basis of our existence as an Indian tribe.

The Skull Valley Band continues to practice its traditional ways and customary form of government. We have chosen to maintain our historic council form of government in which all members may participate, rather than adopting the "Indian Reorganization Act" model. Our beliefs include respect and honor for our land and our values. It also includes the desire to be self-sufficient and to use our land base to benefit the health and welfare of our tribal members. We have studied various economic development programs, and we have spent more than eight years researching a spent nuclear fuel storage facility, which first came to our attention through the U.S. Government. We have studied the environmental effects of such a facility, taking into account our cultural and religious values, as well as archeological and religious sites. After thoughtful research and study, we have concluded that the storage facility currently proposed will have no adverse effects on any sacred or cultural sites or upon the wildlife that inhabits our reservation or upon our neighbors in the State of Utah. In fact, this storage project offers less environmental threat to the reservation, and the surrounding areas, than virtually any other industry that we might bring to the reservation. Because it is an interim storage facility and no fuel is handled on site, there is nothing to be released into the air, the water, or buried in our ground.

The 840 acres out of our approximately 18,000-acre reservation, leased by the Skull Valley Band to Private Fuel Storage for this project was carefully chosen to minimize any interference with the tribal members who live on the reservation, to avoid interference with sacred or religious sites, and to avoid adverse effects on the wildlife and plant life existing on the reservation. As the facility is built and operated, it will be subject to federal and tribal laws and regulations to assure that it meets the standards contemplated by the Skull Valley Band and Private Fuel Storage. The Skull Valley Band has deep respect for its cultural heritage and the land. We believe that this storage project offers a safe, clean industry to provide much needed economic development on our reservation, including jobs for members of the Band enabling some

members to move back to the reservation, and preserving the Band's cultural heritage while protecting the land and its environment.

The Skull Valley Band offers its complete cooperation in the EIS process and looks forward to being an active participant.