

**TESTIMONY¹ OF
 GOVERNOR MICHAEL O. LEAVITT
 STATE OF UTAH
 Regarding the
 U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
 INTENT TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
 AND CONDUCT A SCOPING PROCESS ON THE
 PROPOSAL TO STORE HIGH LEVEL NUCLEAR WASTE
 ON THE
 SKULL VALLEY INDIAN RESERVATION**

**Salt Lake City, Utah
 June 2, 1998**

I want to thank the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission for providing an opportunity for public comment regarding this proposal. Private Fuel Storage or P-F-S, a Limited Liability Corporation, proposes to store high level nuclear waste fuel rods on the Skull Valley Goshute Indian Reservation. They would store up to 40,000 metric tons of spent fuels 40 miles west of Salt Lake City. This is the largest temporary storage facility every proposed. It represents 25 percent more spent fuel rods than has been generated in the past by the entire nuclear industry. We have been told by PFS that the proposed high level nuclear waste storage is safe because it is stored at nuclear power plants in the East, Midwest, and California. If it is so safe, it can stay where it is!

The impacts of the proposed facility reach far beyond the boundaries of the reservation. Therefore, the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement or EIS which the NRC prepares under the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA must also extend to impacts beyond the Reservation.

The EIS must consider the cumulative impact of the proposed storage site and the numerous other facilities and activities in the West Desert. This area is already the storage site for 43 percent of the U. S. stockpile of chemical weapons, weapons which we are destroy to reduce public risks. The malfunction and crash of a Cruise Missile on the adjacent Dugway Proving Grounds, as well as crashes of F-16s on maneuvers over the adjacent Utah Test and Training Range are well-documented. These existing operations and previous accidents must be considered in the EIS. You have a responsibility under NEPA to know, to evaluate and to mitigate the cumulative impacts of those activities, or to disapprove the proposed storage facility. Utah and the Skull Valley Reservation are not safe places to storage lethal radioactive waste fuel rods.

¹ Via video taping.

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cannot substitute for or supplant the NEPA process and public review. As an alternative, the NEPA process could be postponed until the license is complete and all the information necessary for the NEPA analysis is available to the public.

If there are any questions or clarification regarding my comments, I will be happy to respond in writing. Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in the scoping process. As you know, this is a matter of **great importance** to our State - so important, in fact, that our State Legislature acted almost **unanimously** to oppose this facility and to put into place safeguards for this kind of waste. We expect the same kind of care on the part of the federal government, and we look forward to working with you to assure that occurs.