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My Name is Larry Wissbeck. My spouse Cathy and I are residents of Caliente and we own the Intellectual Cowboy Bookstore at 101 Clover Street. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 156, Caliente, Nevada 89008.

I have been a resident of Nevada since the early days of the above ground Nuclear Tests at the Nevada Test Site. I was among those Nevadans that witnessed the Atomic Bomb explosions. I was among those told that there was no health risk from atomic fall-out. Others and I were, in fact, told that a little bit of radiation is good for you. We were told that all we needed to protect ourselves from nuclear radiation was to "duck and cover." This information, incidentally, came from genuine scientists.

We were also told it was our patriotic duty to accept the need for absolute secrecy regarding everything nuclear. Whenever we have been permitted a glimpse behind that veil of absolute secrecy we have seen what unspeakable horrors were visited on my friends and fellow citizens in the form of deaths from cancer, organ failure, and other forms of radiation poisoning.

The passage of time has not changed the Nuclear Industry's level of disregard for the welfare of the citizens of our State or our Nation.

I would like to quote from a report by the *Presidents Foreign Intelligence Advisor Board*, chaired by former Senator Warren Rudman and released just this past Tuesday:

"Never has the members of the panel witnessed a bureaucratic culture so thoroughly saturated with cynicism and disregard for authority...Never before has this panel found such a cavalier attitude toward one of the most serious responsibilities in the Federal Government...Never before has the panel found an agency with the bureaucratic insolence to dispute, delay and resist implementation of a presidential directive...
The DOE is still unconvinced of Presidential authority..."

These quotes describe an agency and an industry that is absolutely out of control. They describe an agency and an industry that recognizes no authority. They describe an agency and an industry that has no regard for the citizens of our nation, our state, or our community. These

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quotes describe an agency and an industry that absolutely must not be trusted to look out for our health and welfare. As you approach licensing the DOE you should bear in mind who you are attempting to regulate.

It is patently obvious that the DOE and the NRC are engaged in an effort to set "standards" for nuclear contamination that will increase our exposure to radiation. Again it is patently obvious that the reason for increasing our exposure to radiation is to expedite the goals of the Nuclear Industry, NOT to protect the health and welfare of the citizens of our Nation, our State, or our Community.

The Citizens of Lincoln County have been given decades of assurances that radiation exposure is a natural phenomenon. There is "background radiation" everywhere. Our legacy from the atomic era is that the "background radiation" here in Lincoln County is 100 percent higher than where you live in Washington DC area. Enjoy your stay here. You may wish to exercise shallow breathing practices during the remainder of your visit.

I would like to offer testimony in two areas where you have asked for input:

1. When you identify the critical group most likely to be impacted by radiation, it is likely that the Citizens of Lincoln County and particularly the citizens of Caliente ought to be carefully considered as or for inclusion in the critical group.
Our City and County Governments have requested that an Inter-modal transfer facility for high level nuclear waste be established in Caliente. As all the high level waste to be deposited in the geologic repository will apparently be funneled through our community and as we can expect to be subjected to the same "anticipated operational occurrences" or "accidents" expected at the *Geologic Repository Operations Area*, then we can expect both long and short term radiation exposure from a variety of "pathways." We can reasonably expect direct exposure and exposure from contaminated soil and water.

2. The proposed Inter-modal transfer station would seem to be in need of similar design to the *Geologic Repository Operations Area*. It appears that an inter-modal transfer station would be subjected to the same "anticipated operational occurrences" or "accidents" as the *GROA* and yet there is no design presented or provisions in the licensing agreement for this critical element of the repository. This is much too important to be left as a last minute surprise. Your rules already admit to rushing measures to complete the licensing procedure by a date certain. It would be wrong to compromise the health and welfare of the citizens of Caliente with more last minute considerations.

And finally, some words as much for my fellow citizens who favor laying out the welcome mat for Nuclear Waste in Lincoln County as for the NRC. Those who urge concern and caution in this matter have been labeled "Luddites" and irrational fear mongers. Please do not characterize our fears as "irrational." Our fears are no less rational than those of a person who has been shot twice, and while staring down the barrel of a loaded gun, is fearful of being shot again. You were wrong about the dangers of above ground nuclear tests, you were wrong about the dangers of underground nuclear tests...It would be irrational to be wrong about the dangers of the Nuclear Waste Repository.

**Testimony before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Caliente, Nevada
June 17, 1999**