

**Testimony of Darrell Campbell to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Rockville, Maryland**

January 18, 2000

Good morning Chairman Meserve and Commissioners Dicus, Diaz, McGaffigan, and Merrifield. My name is Darrell Campbell and I am Treasurer of the Prairie Island Indian Community in Minnesota.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be here today to speak at this meeting of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission concerning the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed national nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain.

I am here today to tell you that we do not support the No-Action alternative, as described in the draft EIS. While we recognize that the No-Action alternative was evaluated to provide a baseline for comparison with the Proposed Action, we believe that it is necessary to point out that the No Action alternative has serious ramifications for my tribe.

My tribe lives in the shadow of a nuclear power plant and a nuclear waste storage facility 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We receive no benefit from the existence of this power plant and waste

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storage facility—no tax base or even electricity, we even fund our own environmental monitoring and emergency preparedness programs. Nowhere in the United States is the problem of nuclear waste more evident than at Prairie Island. As you may be aware, there is a spent fuel storage facility at a commercial nuclear power plant just 600 yards from our homes, church and government offices, and there is no date in sight for its removal.

We didn't ask for the nuclear power plant to be built right next to our reservation. Nor did we ask for a spent fuel storage facility to be constructed and operated next to us. As you are also aware, dry cask storage is supposed to be a temporary, not a permanent, solution to the Nation's nuclear waste management problem.

We are the closest community next to a nuclear power plant and waste storage facility. We live within feet – not miles. To even suggest that the spent fuel will remain on-site, either with institutional controls or unimaginably, without controls, is not acceptable to my people.

As discussed in the draft EIS, if the spent fuel is left on-site in dry storage, eventually the radioactive materials would escape to the environment, contaminating the atmosphere, soil, surface water

and groundwater. Although there is no mention of what would happen to the people living near these sites, I assume that they would either be removed or face contamination. We have no intention of leaving our land, land that was promised to us by the United States government. Unless this waste is removed, our children, and our children's children will be forced to live with this very real health and safety threat

An analysis of Yucca Mountain must include a complete analysis of transportation issues, including routes, transportation packages, health and safety concerns, and cultural resource impacts. All jurisdictions – tribal, state and local – must be fully prepared for those shipments and be included in developing emergency preparedness plans.

Since we have lived next to a nuclear neighbor for more than 30 years, we are sensitive to the concerns of other tribes near Yucca Mountain. I want to emphasize that all tribal concerns must be addressed fully and not merely “considered.”

Ultimately, we must think hard about our continued reliance on this form of energy. Yucca Mountain cannot hold all the nuclear waste that we will generate if we continue using nuclear power.

We're only prolonging the struggle of how to handle the nuclear waste that continues to pile up. And as we have learned, no one wants this in their backyard.

The No-Action alternative means the federal government will continue to deny its responsibility for the nuclear waste that sits on Prairie Island and in 71 other communities. As stated in the draft EIS, Congress has affirmed that the Federal government is responsible for the permanent disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high level radioactive waste. The safe disposal of these materials is a National responsibility and priority.

Thank you for this opportunity to brief the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on our reaction to the draft Environmental Impact Statement for Yucca Mountain. We plan to submit technical comments on the draft to the Department of Energy and would be glad to provide you copies.