

ATTACHMENT 2

ESTEVE'S DECLARATION

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING BOARD

In the Matter of:

U.S. Department of Energy

(License Application for Geologic Repository
at Yucca Mountain)

Docket No. 63-001

February 24, 2009

DECLARATION OF PAULINE ESTEVES

I, Pauline Esteves, declare and state as follows:

1. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America, that the foregoing is true and correct.

2. I am a member of the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe. I am an Elder in the Tribe and serve on the Tribal Council. I am the Cultural Advisor for the Historic Preservation Committee.

3. I am 84 years old and have been a member of the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe my entire life. I was asked to make this Declaration to describe the cultural significance to the Timbisha Shoshone of the springs in and around Death Valley, California, the traditional homeland of the Timbisha Shoshone people, and the impact that the operation of a high-level nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain would have on Timbisha Shoshone cultural interests.

4. The springs in Death Valley, like all of the water on our traditional homelands, holds very significant spiritual value for us. The springs have been at the center of our culture

people to remain at a distance from the springs so that animals may use the springs.

5. To our culture, everything in nature is connected. We view water, including water in the springs at Death Valley, to be the blood of Mother Earth. To contaminate our springs would be to rob Mother Earth.

6. We rely on water in the springs to prepare medicines, people are blessed and to help grow plants that we use in traditional medicines, such as winterfat (a white flower), sage, turtle-back, creosote, and rabbit bush. If our springs were contaminated, the water and the plants that grow around them would be useless to us for medicinal purposes because they, too, would be contaminated.

7. The purity of the water also must be maintained for other medicinal purposes. Before drinking from springs, many of the Timbisha people still put water on our heads and our faces for spiritual healing purposes; to us, water is medicine. If our springs are contaminated, our water will cease to be our medicine.

8. Among the springs that are significant to our culture are healing springs of hot water. Not just anyone could go into these springs. People could enter only in groups of two or three, and a ceremony had to be held before the healing springs could be entered.


9. Water, including the water in the springs at Death Valley, also has played a central role in our ceremonies. The Timbisha Shoshone have a ceremony that used to be held before and after harvesting mesquite beans, we would grind the beans by water from the springs before going into the mountains for the summer months.

10. Our people also have traditional dancing grounds that are sacred to us. One of the traditional dancing grounds is located at Furnace Creek. These dancing grounds are very important to our culture. If our dancing grounds are contaminated, this will be a tremendous

insult to our culture.

11. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America,
that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated this 21st day of February, 2009.



Pauline Esteves, Tribal Council Member
Timbisha Shoshone Tribe