

PUBLIC SUBMISSION

As of: 11/20/15 2:54 PM Received: November 19, 2015 Status: Pending_Post Tracking No. 1jz-8mcn-yr5t Comments Due: November 20, 2015 Submission Type: Web

Docket: NRC-2015-0051

Department of Energy; Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada; Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Comment On: NRC-2015-0051-0004

Department of Energy; Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada; Correction and Extension of Comment Period

Document: NRC-2015-0051-DRAFT-0067

Comment on FR Doc # 2015-23510

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RULES AND PROCEDURES
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General Comment

NRC's DSEIS has concluded that radioactive releases from the proposed Yucca Mountain high-level radioactive waste dump would be SMALL -- that is, essentially minimal, and harmless -- over the course of a million years into the future. This conflicts with the more honest appraisal of geologic repositories by the Blue Ribbon Commission.

Actually, if irradiated nuclear fuel is ever buried at Yucca, it would leak massively, into the groundwater, creating a "nuclear sacrifice zone" over a broad region downstream, as would all geologic depositories eventually, according to the Blue Ribbon Commission.

This would include hazardous, even deadly, radioactive contamination of the groundwater, currently used for drinking and irrigation water in Nevada's agricultural Amargosa Valley; the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Death Valley National Park, as well as the Timbisha Shoshone Indian community inhabiting Death Valley, would also be in harm's way.

The potential for disproportionate impacts on minority or low-income populations is especially high, considering the current lifestyle of the Timbisha Shoshone Indian community, as well as the traditional lifestyle of the Western Shoshone Indian Nation.

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Template = ADM - 013

E-RIDS= ADM-03

Add= *C. Fenwick (ADM)*

The potential for cumulative impacts associated with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions is very high. After all, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Department of Energy, and military conducted atmospheric nuclear weapons tests in the vicinity of Yucca Mountain from 1951 to 1963. They continued to conduct underground full-scale nuclear weapons tests at the Nevada Test Site (NTS) from 1963 to 1992, many of which leaked radioactivity to the atmosphere and environment, as well as contaminated regional groundwater. Even after 1992, nuclear weapons testing has continued at the NTS, in the form of sub-critical experiments involving plutonium.

Another cumulative impact involves the large-scale transport to, and dumping of so-called "low" level radioactive wastes at the NTS.

If NRC is not factoring High-Burnup fuel as waste, then it is not accurately assessing all relevant factors, all of which impact the post-closure impacts. If the percentage of High-Burnup fuel has not been accurately calculated, and it's increased source term, heat, etc. factored in, then the starting point contaminant concentration for the SEIS has no credible technical basis.

We join with the State of Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects, several environmental groups, and others in urging NRC to extend the public comment deadline by at least an additional 60 days. We also urge that additional in-person public meetings be scheduled in California (where Yucca's radioactively contaminated groundwater would ultimately surface in springs), as well as elsewhere across the country (given that Yucca's opening would launch the unprecedented, large-scale shipment of risky high-level radioactive waste by truck, train, and barge, through most states. And we urge that all in-person public meetings also include the call-in option, already provided at other locations, on earlier dates.