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10 MS. HAGEN: My name is Doreen Hagen. I  
11 represent the Prairie Island Indian community as a  
12 member of our Tribal Council. Prairie Island is  
13 located in a small reservation in southeastern  
14 Minnesota, along the shores of the Mississippi and  
15 Vermilion rivers.

16 We are a small tribe of fewer than 550  
17 members, and we are a young tribe. More than half of  
18 our members are under the age of 18. Our reservation  
19 consists of fewer than 500 acres of land, and some of  
20 that land is in the floodplain, so it is not usable.  
21 We have lived off this land for many generations. It  
22 is sacred land to our people. It is my home, as well  
23 as the final resting place for many -- for my  
24 ancestors.

25 My community understands and appreciates the

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1 concerns of those who are opposed to the storage of  
2 nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain. We respect their  
3 point of view. I am here, however, to share a  
4 different point of view, one that is unique to my

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5 community, and one that most certainly has bearing on  
6 these proceedings.

7 Perhaps nowhere in the United States is the  
8 problem of nuclear waste more evident than on Prairie  
9 Island. No community in the nation lives closer to a  
10 nuclear power plant and nuclear waste storage site than  
11 Prairie Island Indian community. Our homes, community  
12 center, church, government center, and business are all  
13 located fewer than 600 yards from a nuclear power plant  
14 and a nuclear waste storage site operated by Excel  
15 Energy.

16 Currently, 10 above-ground dry cask storage  
17 units of highly radioactive nuclear waste sit just  
18 outside our reservation boundaries. Seven more casks  
19 will be filled within the next few years. And we fear  
20 that the state of Minnesota will allow Excel Energy to  
21 store another 31 casks outside of our reservation, due  
22 to the absence of a national repository.

23 We have never benefited from being forced to  
24 live next to the storage site. We do not even receive  
25 the electricity generated by the nuclear power plant

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1 that produces the waste. The nuclear waste was allowed

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2 on Prairie Island, despite our strong objection, and  
3 the federal government's trust responsibility to our  
4 community.

5 Our health and safety concerns continue to be  
6 ignored. Adding to our concern, there is only one  
7 permanent road leading off Prairie Island away from the  
8 plant and storage units, and that road is blocked, at  
9 times by train activity, and is subject to flooding.

10 We also believe the recent acts of terrorism  
11 increase the need to remove the nuclear waste from  
12 Prairie Island. The storage casks themselves sit only  
13 yards away from the Mississippi River, or on a  
14 floodplain. An accident or an act of terrorism would  
15 potentially devastate our community, and communities  
16 all along the Mississippi River from Minnesota to the  
17 Gulf of Mexico.

18 And there has never been a health study  
19 looking at what, if any, impact living so close to a  
20 nuclear waste storage site has had on our community's  
21 health. We live every day fearing what we do not know.  
22 The federal government has had more than 20 years to  
23 develop a solution for handling the nuclear waste  
24 storage problem. It has been more than two years since

25 the federal government was obligated by law to begin  
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1 removing nuclear waste from Prairie Island and the  
2 nation's other nuclear power plants. Today we fear the  
3 possibility that without a permanent repository, what  
4 has always been called a temporary storage site will  
5 become a permanent storage site. Or worse yet, a  
6 permanent regional storage site, where the federal  
7 government ships waste from other nuclear power plants  
8 to Prairie Island.

9 We cannot allow this to happen. As Indian  
10 people, we have history of valuing and protecting the  
11 earth, the waters, and the air. With this in mind, we  
12 have considered Yucca Mountain very carefully. In  
13 fact, representatives from Prairie Island, including  
14 myself, have visited Yucca Mountain on several  
15 occasions to learn about the facility and witness the  
16 work that is being done there, to determine if the site  
17 is capable of safely storing the nation's nuclear  
18 waste.

19 If science determines that Yucca Mountain is  
20 safe, then we will support it, first as the alternative  
21 of leaving the nation's nuclear waste where it sits at

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22 sites scattered across the nation. Perhaps more  
23 threatening than the nuclear waste that just sits 600  
24 yards from our community, the Prairie Island facility  
25 is not designed for permanent storage, and is simply  
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1 too close to our community to be safe.

2 We did not ask for a nuclear neighbor, and we  
3 know the people of Nevada have not asked for one  
4 either. Nobody wants nuclear waste stored in their  
5 backyard. But, our tribal government owes it to our  
6 community, especially our children and future  
7 generations, to do what we can to see that our  
8 ancestral home does not become a permanent reminder of  
9 the nation's failed nuclear waste policy.

10 We believe that storing nuclear waste in a  
11 remote military secure location in a facility designed  
12 for permanent storage is a better solution than leaving  
13 it where it is, virtually unguarded and only yards away  
14 from a vulnerable community with limited evacuation  
15 routes.

16 The federal government first failed in its  
17 trust responsibility to our community more than 25  
18 years ago when it allowed a nuclear power plant to be

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19 built next to our reservation. And it failed again in  
20 1994 when it allowed nuclear waste to be stored 600  
21 yards from our home. It is time for the federal  
22 government to do the right thing and help our community  
23 and remove the nuclear waste from Prairie Island.  
24 Thank you.