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--> EIS OFFICE,
U.S. Department of Energy,
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management,
1551 Hillshire Drive,
Las Vegas, NV 89134

Comments from Dennis Bechtel, 319 Encima Court, Henderson, Nevada 89014 on the following documents:

- (1) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada (Draft Repository SEIS)
- (2) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada -Nevada RailTransportation Corridor (Draft Nevada Rail Corridor SEIS) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Rail Alignment for the Construction and Operation of a Railroad in Nevada to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada (Draft Rail Alignment EIS)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the draft documents cited above.

I provided a statement at the 03 December 2007 Department of Energy (DOE) hearing in Las Vegas, Nevada, which as I understand will also be part of the final record. It should be noted that in the 03 Dec 2007 public transcript I was identified as Dennis Spectel. This is incorrect. My actual name is Dennis Bechtel. (I was the last person to provide comments at the hearing).

General Comments

1 [1. While I appreciate the opportunity to provide comment, my experience and observations lead me to believe that very little of the public's concerns will result in change in the final EISs. This is unfortunate because the public, local and state agencies, and public interest groups spend considerable time in reviewing documents, attending meetings, etc. (see Number 3 following) These comments (bolstered by studies) are often substantive and deserve to be considered in both EIS's, particularly since those commenting may be affected by the proposed repository and ancillary issues.]

2 [2. The State of Nevada and others requested additional time to review the EIS documents. This, unfortunately, was not granted. Given the fact that several weeks of the review period were during the Christmas and New Years holidays, it would have been a magnanimous gesture on the part of DOE to extend the review at least by several weeks to accommodate the holiday period.]

3 [3. DOE's response to public comments should be released prior to the release of the Final EIS. Further, the DOE response to comments should have sufficient detail to enable the public to understand how their concerns were considered (and, where appropriate, addressed and implemented). Transparency is important.]

The Draft Repository SEIS

4 [1. The Transportation, Aging and Disposal (TAD) systems will be deployed in locales with citizens and workers. The final SEIS, however, fails to comprehensively assess risks and impacts to workers, facilities, communities and the environment at all of the reactor locations where TAD would be utilized.

2. TADs are being deployed at certain reactor sites either with or contemplating the use of onsite dry storage facilities. These storage/transport containers may be incompatible with TADs. Systems such as these would require either the repackaging of spent nuclear fuel into TADs prior to transport or the use of non-standard transport vehicles. Issues such as this need to be discussed in the SEIS.

3. It is apparent that TADs can only be shipped via rail or by oversized/heavy-haul trucks. Because rail access may not be constructed to the Yucca Mountain site, the Final SEIS should evaluate the impacts of a TAD-based transportation system not employing rail as the primary mode of transportation.

4. TADs are essentially conceptual at this time (no design is provided in the SEIS). Not considered is if the TAD system is not implemented. DOE needs to provide a meaningful alternative for a no-TAD contingency.]

Draft Rail Alignment EIS

5 [1. The draft Rail EIS includes the Mina Rail Corridor as a "non-preferred alternative." Because the Walker River Paiute Tribe has refused

permission for DOE to use its reservation for the proposed rail spur (and permission is required to use the route) it is my understanding that the Mina alternative had been excluded from consideration. It is, therefore, inappropriate for DOE to have included Mina as an alternative for comparing rail corridors in the draft EIS.]

6 [2. With Mina no longer an option, the remaining options would appear to be the Caliente route, existing rail routes or truck transport (legal and/or overweight). This would appear to require a reworking of the No Action Alternative. The DEIS, however, indicates that the future course "is uncertain." In fact, if rail access to Yucca Mountain were not implemented, the Final EIS needs to evaluate the possible impacts of a legal-weight trucks and existing rail routes.

3. The consideration of legal weight trucks and existing rail routes could mean the transport of nuclear waste through Las Vegas, Reno as well as other urban areas throughout the nation. Since an existing infrastructure transport system is a viable No Action Alternative this would require a greater consideration of socioeconomic impacts than has been provided. This would include, in the case of Nevada communities, an evaluation of possible impacts to our substantive tourist industry, not to mention negative effects to property values of residential and commercial properties.]

7 [4. It should be noted that the 2000 Draft and Final Yucca Mountain EIS also did not consider potential impacts to Las Vegas tourism from the transportation of the waste (despite having illustrated possible routes on the Las Vegas Beltway in the EIS). There are court cases (e.g., *Komis v. the City of Santa Fe, New Mexico*) as well as other studies, many generated by the State of Nevada, however, to confirm the potential for impact. Interestingly, in the 1986 Environmental Assessment produced for Yucca Mountain DOE agreed that impacts to tourism might be a factor and that studies should be conducted. As was noted in the document:

"... the potential for adverse public perception of a repository and its associated waste transportation could adversely affect the tourism industry. The importance of public perception lies in the attractiveness of the image of Las Vegas to potential visitors. Concerns have been expressed that this image could be affected the high-level radioactive waste-disposal system, particularly when accompanied by extensive media attention. Preliminary research to date concerning the potential effect of a repository on tourism is inconclusive; therefore further studies will be conducted." (U.S. Department of Energy (1986) Environmental Assessment, Yucca Mountain Site, Nevada Research and Development Area, Nevada. 5-110)]

8 [5. The EIS greatly underestimates the potential consequences of terrorist attack. It also ignores the apparent desire of terrorists to obtain nuclear material to create a weapon of mass destruction (or at a minimum a "dirty bomb"). With all the work being done to prevent another incident using aircraft, etc., obtaining nuclear material or creating a nuclear release should at least be on the scope of potential terrorist actions. This needs more comprehensive treatment in the EIS.]

9 [6. Finally, DOE's contention that non-rail shipments would be made by over-weight trucks is unsubstantiated, and the impacts of the use of overweight truck in Nevada and elsewhere are not analyzed. The impacts on infrastructure could be considerable and should be evaluated.]
