

**Testimony of Gary Hollis, Chairman  
Nye County Board of County Commissioners,  
Nye County, Nevada**

**House Energy and Commerce Committee  
Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy  
"The Department of Energy's Role in Managing Civilian Radioactive Waste"**

**June 1, 2011**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today to discuss the level of local support in Nevada for Yucca Mountain. I am Gary Hollis and I am Chairman of the Nye County Nevada Board of County Commissioners.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, Yucca Mountain is located entirely within Nye County. While this testimony is mine, I want you to know that it reflects the views of the other four Nye County Commissioners, as well as the views of many political and local leaders in rural Nevada.

Mr. Chairman, we deeply appreciate that you and Congressmen Green and Burgess took the time to visit Yucca Mountain and to meet interested people in Nevada. As you learned, there are many of us who live next to Yucca Mountain who support the completion of the licensing process. Most of us who live in the vicinity believe that the decision on Yucca Mountain should be made based on sound science and this can only happen after a full review by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. If the NRC determines that the repository is safe, we favor its construction.

As I am sure you can understand, no one is more concerned about the safety and welfare of the citizens of Nye County than me and the other four Commissioners. It is my community. My family and friends live and work here. I would never accept a federal facility to be located in my county if I thought it was unsafe, no matter what economic benefits were attached to it. Frankly, I resent suggestions that any of the five Nye County Commissioners would jeopardize the health and safety of our citizens for any sum of money. That would not happen on my watch.

When Congress passed the 1987 Amendment to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, it provided money for local communities impacted by Yucca Mountain to fund oversight activities. Nye County used that money to create an extensive independent science program. We used unbiased scientists to conduct the work. After years of effort they found no reason to believe that the repository could not be built and operated safely. We have provided that information to the Department of Energy and the public. Our work was top quality and the results were available to everyone.

I am not saying that Nye County's program answered every question about the safety of Yucca Mountain. The studies done by the Department of Energy were more extensive. What I am saying is that with the information we have, we believe the Yucca Mountain repository can be built and operated safely.

But to get the full picture, we need to see all the evidence from every source. That includes information and analysis by DOE, by the staff of the NRC, and by the State of Nevada. We want every piece of evidence to be reviewed so a final determination of the safety of Yucca

Mountain can be made. That determination can only happen if the licensing process is completed.

Mr. Chairman, if the NRC determines the repository cannot be built and operated safely, I would be the first person to object to its construction. I only ask that all of the facts and science are reviewed by the NRC and that the legal process established by the NWPA is carried out. Let the facts dictate the result, not politics.

My views are shared by the leaders of other rural Nevada counties. Nye County recently passed a resolution of support for the license application -- so have Esmeralda, Mineral, Lander, Churchill and Lincoln Counties. Thus, these six rural counties that would see the most impacts from Yucca Mountain call on the DOE and NRC to complete the licensing process. We are all willing to live by the results of a fair, scientific review process. I ask permission to put all six resolutions in the record.

Beyond the political leaders of those other counties, a majority of the residents of Nye County support the license application. Let me point out that all five current Nye County Commissioners expressed their support for Yucca Mountain and all were elected or re-elected by our citizens. Therefore, it is not accurate to say that there is no local support for Yucca Mountain. The people that live in the neighborhood do support completion of the licensing process.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, as Chairman of the Nye County Board of County Commissioners I can assure you that the people of Nye County know and understand who makes the laws for this nation. I believe that the Secretary of Energy and the NRC Chairman are obstructing the will of Congress. We want to see that the Nuclear Waste Policy Act is followed. We want to see the science reviewed. And, we want to see that the Secretary of Energy and the NRC Chairman follow the law.

Thank you. I am available to answer any questions you may have. I am accompanied by two of the County's technical professionals. They are available to answer questions as well.