

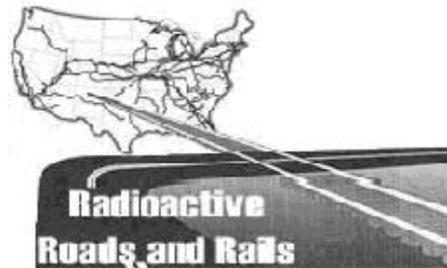


For more information, contact:

Public Citizen's Critical Mass Energy and Environment Program
215 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
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202-546-4996
202-547-7392 (fax)

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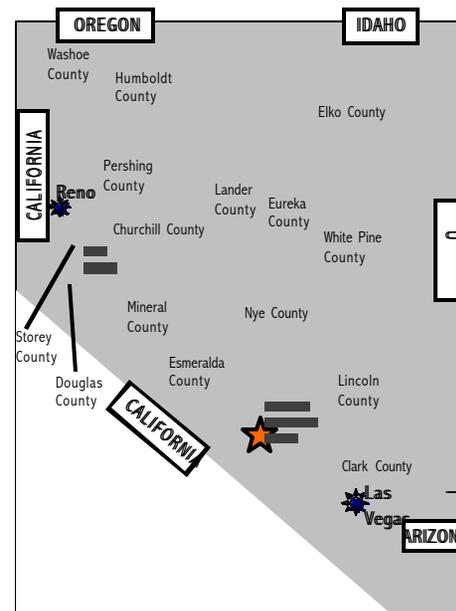
Nuclear Information Resource Service
1424 16th Street, NW
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202-328-0002
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Get the Facts about YUCCA MOUNTAIN, NEVADA and Nuclear Waste!

Where is Yucca Mountain?

Yucca Mountain is located in Nevada, about an hour northwest of Las Vegas. It is in the desert, and the land it occupies includes public land, Nevada Test Site land, and Nellis Air Force Base land. However, all of this land is part of the Western Shoshone traditional homelands. If a dump is built at Yucca Mountain, the Shoshone will lose access to this sacred place.



Yucca Mountain is the only site being considered by the Department of Energy (DOE) as a "permanent disposal" site for the United States' highly radioactive nuclear waste. This spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste is currently located at 77 sites across the country and would have to be transported by truck or rail to Yucca Mountain if that site is approved as a geologic repository.

Under current law, 70,000 metric tons of waste would be allowed to be stored at Yucca Mountain, with 63,000 tons of that being commercial waste and the rest being DOE waste. However, that still would not accommodate all the waste projected to be produced in the U.S. (an estimated 107,500 metric tons of both commercial and DOE waste).

Scientific study at Yucca Mountain has revealed a host of potential problems at the site. Besides being sacred land, Yucca Mountain has many characteristics that make it an unsuitable place to store highly irradiated nuclear waste.

For instance, the people who live near Yucca Mountain, in the Amargosa Valley, depend on the aquifer beneath the mountain for their drinking and irrigation water. This water is sure to be contaminated if nuclear waste is stored inside the mountain. Further, Yucca Mountain is located in an extremely active earthquake zone. Read on for more details!



A Threat to Groundwater

The Department of Energy (DOE) talks about “disposing of” nuclear waste. But nuclear waste cannot be disposed of; it only can be stored, and the DOE has indicated that if radioactive waste is stored in Yucca Mountain, it will leak into the groundwater someday.

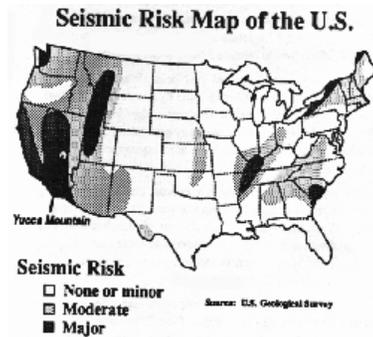
The DOE is finding more and more problems with the “natural barrier” system at Yucca Mountain, and the agency appears to be scrambling to piece together an engineered barrier system that delay but not prevent leakage into the groundwater.

The Department of Energy’s own studies show that if the groundwater is contaminated, people will be harmed by drinking this water, eating produce and meat grown with the contaminated water, and drinking milk from cows that have been exposed to the contamination through their feed and drink.

If radioactive waste leaks and contaminates the groundwater beneath Yucca Mountain, it would not only jeopardize the health of nearby residents, who depend on that aquifer as their sole source of potable water, but also it would jeopardize the health of the many people who drink milk produced on dairy farms in the region, including families and children in the Los Angeles area. Thirty-five thousand gallons of milk per day from the Amargosa Valley in Nevada are sold in Los Angeles, California.

The Danger of Earthquakes

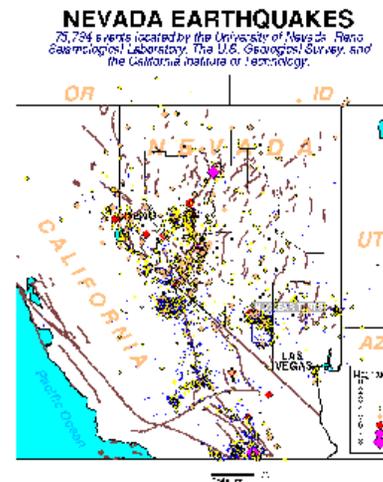
Should an earthquake hit the Yucca Mountain area while nuclear waste is stored there, disastrous consequences could result. The groundwater table could rise, coming into contact with the stored waste and contaminating it. Or the storage canisters themselves could break open. Also, portions of the mountain could collapse, permitting no access to the broken canisters inside.



Nevada ranks third in the nation for current seismic activity. Since 1976, there have been more than 600 seismic events of a magnitude greater than 2.5 within a 50-mile radius of Yucca Mountain. The Western Shoshone call Yucca Mountain “Serpent Swimming Westward” and speak of its constant movement. In 1992, an earthquake with a magnitude of 5.6 originating just 10 miles from Yucca Mountain caused significant damage to the DOE field office building at the site.

Further, some scientists believe that a

significant rise in groundwater levels could occur as the result of an earthquake, possibly flooding the repository. This type of event would surely compromise the integrity of the nuclear waste containers and contaminate the groundwater beneath Yucca Mountain. Despite the evidence to the contrary, the DOE has said it considers it unlikely that an earthquake would strike the region.



Nevada Earthquakes: 79,794 events located by the University of Nevada, Reno Seismological Laboratory; the United States Geological Survey; and the California Institute of Technology

More information on these and other technical problems with Yucca Mountain can be found at:

<http://www.state.nv.us/nucwaste/>

What Can I Do?

N Write to your Members of Congress and tell them it’s a bad idea to store nuclear waste in Yucca Mountain. You can use the sample postcard text below, or write one in your own words. Send your note on a postcard depicting a local scene in your community to drive home the point that you’re a voter in their next election.

N Host a letter-writing party and have your friends and family write letters or postcards, too.

N Also, if you belong to a group yourself, **put an article in the newsletter**, make an announcement at a meeting, or arrange to have a speaker address your group on this issue.

N Contact us (see back of flyer) for more flyers or other materials or to arrange a presentation to your group.

Dear Rep./Senator _____	
I think storing high-level nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, is a bad idea. Science has shown that earthquakes pose a definite threat to safety, and that the aquifer beneath Yucca Mountain will be contaminated with radiation.	Representative X House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515
Please OPPOSE all legislation that would send nuclear waste to Nevada.	OR Senator Y U.S. Senate Washington, DC 20510
Sincerely, Your Complete Name and Address	