

The Legacy Project

identifies and addresses ways to protect future generations from impacts of the proposed High-Level Nuclear Waste Repository that may be being overlooked by other agencies.

1. Who will oversee the repository?
2. How will contamination show up?
3. How will exposure be compared?
4. Are scientific models relevant?



Humans and all life in the Yucca Mountain area face a unique situation: we are poised between potential radiological disasters. The Nevada Test Site has detonated over 1,000 nuclear weapons since 1951, in the air, and underground— above, within and below the water table. Fallout from these bombs has spread throughout the world. Radioactive and otherwise toxic materials injected into the groundwater from weapons testing may be mobile and heading towards community water supplies and beyond.

Now, 77,000 metric tons of high-level nuclear waste may be transported from all over the U.S. and buried in tunnels beneath Yucca Mountain, on the western perimeter of the Test Site adjacent to several bomb blast zones. Determining what changes take place in the future must be based on knowing conditions now.

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To:

RADIATION & HEALTH
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What is the
Yucca Mountain
Legacy Project?



PROTECTING HEALTH
& HABITAT FOR ALL
FUTURE GENERATIONS

Key Yucca Mountain Legacy Project Areas:

Independent Stakeholder Oversight Board

Local people know their homeland and issues, and they care deeply about the outcome. A credible board of stakeholders (affected people) should include a diversity of skills and knowledge, such as ranchers, university or other researchers, local government, emergency personnel and representative nonprofit organizations. A wide range of opinions and points of view should be included. The board should be independently funded, not a Dept. of Energy (DOE) supported 'citizen's advisory board', so as to maintain maximum credibility and objectivity. We feel strongly about establishing such a group before the site begins any operations.

Background Definitions

A sound characterization of background, (what the site is like now) to measure future changes against, including water, air and soil, and plant and animal life. Other U.S. communities who's health is now impacted by radioactive contamination from DOE sites did not measure radioactive levels beforehand. (In fact, no measurements were taken anywhere in the U.S. before fallout from nuclear bombs started drifting on the wind.)



Therefore, determining dose reconstruction and responsibility for rising health problems such as cancer is hampered by the in-

ability to prove what changes actually occurred or why.

At Yucca Mountain, some radioactive emissions will occur from past nuclear weapons testing and some from natural elements. It is important to identify the most likely emissions from the Yucca Mt. site, both radioactive and other toxins, and establish background definitions for these elements in particular.



Disease Registry & Exposure Data

Disease history is important to establish in case an increase occurs, for whatever reason. The incidence of disease could be affected by the standard of living going up or down, changes in climate or food source, population density, etc.

These same lifestyle changes could affect rates and pathways of exposure to whatever contaminants exist as well. For example, EPA Safe Drinking Water Standards are based on drinking two liters of water a day. However, in the Death Valley area, anyone should drink twice that much, and outdoor workers should drink much more. Therefore, exposure to waterborne contaminants increases exponentially. Establishing accurate data as much as possible beforehand is vital.

Stakeholder-Approved Database and Methods

Too often data that are used to estimate exposures, uncertainties and risks do not reflect the

site being addressed. A stakeholder-approved database and methods would allow analyses of risks from Yucca Mt. Repository operations that accurately reflect the specific local site, lifestyles and conditions. This tool should be able to be understood and used by everyone.

2005: Legacy Project - Phase 1

In 2005, HOME will be working with contracted experts and local agencies to establish baseline levels of radionuclides and other carcinogens in Yucca Mt. area groundwater. This involves locating and archiving existing data as well as conducting independent water samples for comparison.

Identifying other concerned agencies and organization for data collection purposes is also laying the groundwork for future cooperation and creating an oversight board for the Waste Repository in the future.

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