Nye County, Nevada
Board of Commissioners

RESOLUTION STATING THE INTENT OF NYE COUNTY TO ACTIVELY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY ENGAGE WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE), THE ADMINISTRATION, AND CONGRESS AS THE YUCCA MOUNTAIN PROJECT PROCEEDS TO FINAL DESIGN, LICENSING, AND IMPLEMENTATION:

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has voted to move the Administration's proposed Yucca Mountain Project, located in Nye County, Nevada, towards final design, licensing, and implementation.

WHEREAS, since 1940 the federal government has selected sites in Nye County for nuclear weapons testing, air force fighter training, and low-level radioactive waste disposal in cleanup of other sites in the nation's weapons complex.

WHEREAS, these activities (the Nevada Test Site, the Nellis Test and Training Range, and the Tonopah Test Range) have made major contributions to national defense but meager contribution to the Site County's economic or revenue base.

WHEREAS, the management of 11 million acres of federal lands in Nye County, comprising 98% of the county's total land area, makes meager contribution to the Site County's economic or revenue base, and forecloses opportunity for local community development.

WHEREAS, while the President has recommended and the Congress has mandated that DOE should prepare and apply for a license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to construct a repository at Yucca Mountain, many questions and issues regarding the Yucca Mountain Project remain to be addressed—including the safety and equity of the Yucca Mountain Project as proposed, and whether the Yucca Mountain Project will be implemented as proposed.

WHEREAS, the duty of the representative local government to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens requires the active engagement of Nye County to ensure that the questions and issues referenced above are addressed in design and licensing as well as in implementation, and to provide assurance of same for the residents of the single local entity to which the nation's highly radioactive wastes would be transferred.

WHEREAS, Nye County has prepared a "Community Protection Plan" that identifies the legitimate objectives of the site county, and the protections it expects in the event that the federal government transfers the nation's highly radioactive wastes from 131 sites in 39 states to a single site at Yucca Mountain, in Nye County.

WHEREAS, if implemented, the Yucca Mountain Project should be more than just a repository 12 miles north of Lathrop Wells in the Nye County community of Amargosa Valley, but the center for a community of synergistic scientific, engineering, educational, and entrepreneurial activities for management and possible reuse of the nation's highly radioactive wastes, and for the demonstration of alternative forms of energy for future generations.

WHEREAS, it is just such a vision for the Yucca Mountain Project that offers the best long-run prospect for converting long-standing resistance and mistrust within the State of Nevada to constructive engagement and cooperation.

WHEREAS, DOE can most effectively and efficiently implement the above-stated vision for the Yucca Mountain Project through close coordination and cooperation with its Nevada Site County, and Nye County intends to constructively engage with DOE to achieve this vision.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. Nye County intends to engage energetically and constructively with the Department of Energy and the U.S. Congress as the Yucca Mountain Project proceeds to final design, licensing, and implementation.

2. Nye County intends to make constructive scientific, technical, and strategy contributions to address key issues in repository design, licensing, and performance confirmation, as well as transportation and project management.

3. Nye County anticipates constructive engagement by DOE, the Administration, and Congress in addressing such issues in ways that also address the concerns and aspirations of DOE's Site County in Nevada.

4. Nye County will use its "Community Protection Plan" as a resource and framework for its constructive engagement with DOE, the Administration, and Congress as the Yucca Mountain Project proceeds to design, licensing, and possible implementation.

5. Nye County will vigorously pursue the objectives articulated in its Community Protection Plan: local empowerment for assurance of safety and health; equity in transportation; and development of community capacity and resources. The vision is that, if implemented, the Yucca Mountain Project should not be just a repository where the nation's highly radioactive wastes are transferred for storage in perpetuity, but the center for a community of synergistic scientific, engineering, educational, and entrepreneurial activities for management and possible reuse of the nation's highly radioactive wastes, and for the demonstration of alternative forms of energy for future generations.

Adopted by unanimous vote on August 6, 2002 by the Nye County Board of Commissioners.

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