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Jenna Morton Comments STB EIS for the Caliente Line
December 4, 2008

I am speaking to you today on behalf of my 1200 employees. Las Vegas is the #1 tourist destination in the United States. We got that way by creating the greatest brand in the world. The Las Vegas business community has gone to great lengths to develop and guard that brand. Our success is based on both perception and experience. The Las Vegas experience is one of a complete mental escape. My employees work very hard to provide that experience—their livelihood depends on it. Currently the experience matches the perception we have created.

Nuclear waste destroys that perception. Nuclear waste does not belong here.

Our success is responsible for dramatic population growth in Nevada. The Las Vegas Valley alone is now home to over 2 million people and is one of the most populous cities in the American West. We are no longer a stopover on the pioneer trail. With nearly 40 million visitors per year, during any given week we are also home to 800 thousand additional people. This growth and success is based on maintaining the experience we have put our hearts and souls into.

I believe we are all well aware of the very real risks associated with the Yucca Mountain project itself from radiation leeching into our precious groundwater, to Yucca's unviable location in an earthquake zone and its status as an early volcano. These risks alone should have ruled Yucca Mountain out as a nuclear waste dump from the get go.

I know that today we are focusing specifically on a relatively small rail line necessary to ultimately deliver this deadly waste to Yucca Mountain—small that is relative to the distances the waste would have to travel on various existing lines prior to reaching the Caliente Line. I submit to you that in doing an environmental impact study there are various environments that must be taken into consideration.

While the focus may initially be the immediate physical environment of the rail line itself, that environment (while also precious) does not exist in isolation. While considering the consequences of building this piece of rail you must be aware that any such decision has repercussions extending from one coast of the United States to the other. (Map) To reach Yucca Mountain by rail nuclear waste would have to travel through nearly every major metropolitan area in our country exposing literally millions of people to, in the best case-scenario, a dose of radiation equivalent to an x-ray with each of thousands of shipments. Other scenarios range from disruption of commerce by utilizing existing rail lines that carry all number of goods, to the dire consequences of a potential accident. Any consideration of the Caliente spur must take into account the potential environmental impact on each of these communities. Truly, prior to approval each of those communities that may be negatively impacted ought to be offered the same opportunity to comment as you have graciously offered us today.

In addition to the vast physical environment you must also consider the economic environment. Speaking on behalf of the Las Vegas business community I tell you that even if we ignore the potentially dire physical consequences of the transportation of deadly nuclear waste through our community, the mere perception of any risk associated with its transport to Yucca Mountain severely damages Nevada's economic engine. Deutsche bank gaming analyst, Bill Lerner puts it this way, "The prospect of Yucca Mountain as the sole nuclear waste repository carries great economic risk for Nevada. We believe both inbound travel and population migration could be materially hampered by the simple prospect of Yucca's transport and storage risk." People migrating to or visiting Las Vegas would not feel very safe if very close to where they are sleeping there is a train or truck that will at the very least emit radiation and at worst...well I seriously hope that you have already considered the worst case scenarios because that is way beyond my expertise and thankfully my imagination.

What I can tell you is that Nuclear waste and Las Vegas vacation do not belong in the same sentence.

While brand identity and a carefree gestalt may have a disproportionate value for the Las Vegas economy, every other community (including my beloved Chicago, the home of my company's flagship) through which spent nuclear fuel will have to travel prior to reaching the Caliente Line could make a similar claim to the potential negative economic impact of the perception of threat. Overlay the 50-mile impact zone for potential mishap and you do not get a pretty picture.

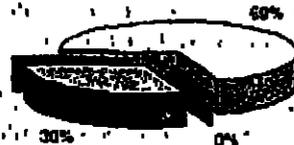
THE EARTH'S WATER SUPPLY

Of all the water on Earth, only a small amount is available for us to use. It's true!

96.5% of the Earth's water supply is salt water. Only 2.8% is fresh water! That 2.8% is divided like this:



- 0.76% is groundwater (we can use some of this water)
- 0.0132% is in lakes and streams (we can use some of this water)
- 1.74% is in glaciers and icecaps
- 0.001% is water vapor



□ Earth's water supply □ Fresh water

□ Groundwater □ Lakes / Streams
□ Glaciers / Icecaps □ Water Vapor

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WHAT'S AN ACRE FOOT?

In the water world, water is commonly measured in acre feet. But what is an acre foot? One acre foot of water can fill one acre of land, approximately the size of a football field, 1 foot deep. An acre-foot contains 325,900 gallons of water, and can supply the annual indoor and outdoor needs of one to two urban households.



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HOW MUCH WATER DOES IT TAKE TO...



- What's New**
- Calendar of Events**
- Tours**
- Birthdays**
- Products**
- Water Leaders**
- School Programs**
- Water Kids**
- Special Projects**
- Become a Member**
- About Us**
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Water KIDS



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- [How Much Water Does it Take to...](#)
- [Water Pollution "No-Knows"](#)
- [Ollie Saves the Planet](#)

THE WATER CYCLE

Did you know that the water you drank this morning might have been the same water a dinosaur drank millions of years ago? Or it may have been the same water that supported Columbus' ships on the sea. There is the same amount of water on Earth today as there has always been. The water keeps moving around in an endless cycle called **the water cycle**.



Water itself is the only substance that exists in liquid, gas and solid form - the keys to the water cycle. Here's how the cycle works:

Water evaporates from oceans, rivers and lakes (water in its liquid form) and rises into the atmosphere (water in its gas form) where it condenses to form clouds. Precipitation then falls to the earth in the form of rain (water in its liquid) or snow (water in its solid form) where it flows into oceans, rivers and lakes and the process begins again.

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In addition to my responsibility to my employees both here and in Chicago, I am also a mother I urge you on behalf of my three children and indeed every one of the millions of people who live along the transportation routes across America to find that both the physical and economic environmental impacts of the Caliente Line are too great. Disregarding the fact that the Department of Energy has not met the minimum legal, technical and scientific thresholds for protecting the public in the Yucca Mountain Project, very simply the means of delivering the waste to the site alone is too great a risk.

Nuclear waste is deadly and it belongs neither in Nevada nor on our rail lines throughout our country.