EIDEN, MAX A.
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March 14, 1996

U. S. Department of Energy
Office of Fissile Materials Disposition
P. O. Box 23786
Washington, D.C. 20026-3786

Gentlemen:

It is my opinion that the possible shipment to, and storage of, weapons-usable fissile material at the INEL site in Idaho is and would jeopardize the public health and safety. The transporting of such material to Idaho as recently shown by the catastrophic train accident is not as safe as one would originally think. 1/10.00.00

1. In simple terms, the INEL is situated upon a high seismic activity geographical area. The attempts of the Department of Energy to show that that is not the case are not well founded. The scientific and geological wisdom is that it is a highly seismic area. 2/09.05.03

2. The INEL site sits directly over the Snake River Aquifer which supplies water to the Snake River, the rural areas of Idaho, and subsequently to the Columbia River drainage which affects most of Idaho and the States of Oregon and Washington. 3/08.03.01

3. To store or dispose of radioactive matter at the INEL which is directly above the Snake River Aquifer is clearly not the best alternative to be chosen by the Department of Energy.

I strongly urge the Department of Energy to open a permanent storage repository as had previously been planned and that the storage and disposition of Weapons-Usable Fissile Materials would be more appropriately stored at that site. 4/12.00.00

In the interim, transporting such material causes unnecessary dangers to the public safety and welfare, which far outbalances any delay which may be incurred in opening a permanent repository. 1/10.00.00 cont.

Simply put, storing or handling radioactive material above the Snake River Aquifer is not a viable alternative from the safety standpoint. The present contamination at the site, the high runoff of surface waters, the continued polluting of the aquifer are a reality. To compound that by brining more materials to the site simply is not acceptable. 3/08.03.01 cont.

M-003

10 00 00 Comment Number 1

The human health risks of material transportations associated with the proposed Pu storage and disposition alternatives are evaluated and presented in Section 4.4 of this PEIS. The more detailed description of the methodology and supporting data for the analysis is presented in the Appendix G. Transportation of radioactive materials between sites includes health risks for both normal operations and accident conditions to the public and workers.

09 05 03 Comment Number 2

Idaho National Engineering Laboratory is situated on the Eastern Snake River Plain, an area of low seismicity. The plain is bordered by the seismically active Centennial Tectonic Belt to the north and the Intermountain Seismic Belt to the east and southeast. Historical and recent seismic data cataloged by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Earthquake Information Center (NEIC), the University of Utah, and the INEL Seismic Network, indicate that earthquakes in the region occur primarily in the Intermountain Seismic Belt and Centennial Tectonic Belt (including the mountains and valleys of the Basin and Range province which bound the plain on the north and south). The seismic characteristics of the plain and the adjacent Basin and Range province are different; earthquakes and active faulting are associated with the Basin and Range tectonic activity, whereas the plain has historically experienced few and small earthquakes. Based on the seismic history and the geologic conditions, earthquakes greater than magnitude 5.5 (and associated strong ground shaking and surface fault rupture) are not likely to occur on the plain.

08 03 01 Comment Number 3

The Department of Energy acknowledges the commentor's opposition to new missions at INEL. Decisions on the storage and disposition of weapons-usable fissile materials will be based upon environmental analyses, technical and economic studies, national policy considerations, and public input.

12 00 00 Comment Number 4

Comment noted.

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I appreciate your consideration of these comments. For more scientific date, please refer to prior Environmental Impact Statements involving the INEL, and scientific materials submitted thereon.

Very truly yours,

Max A. Eiden

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