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December 8, 2006

Ms. M. Lee Bishop
Office of Logistics Management
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
US Department of Energy
1551 Hillshire Drive, M/S 011
Las Vegas, Nevada 89134

Reference: Comments on U. S. Department of Energy Supplemental Yucca Mountain Rail
Corridor Rail Alignment Environmental Impact Statement.

Dear Mr. Bishop,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the newly proposed Mina Rail Corridor. The Esmeralda Board of County Commissioners have approved this letter and read the contents into the record on this date December 8, 2006 for submittal to DOE as comments on the proposed Mina Rail Corridor to Yucca Mountain.

It is particularly important to Esmeralda County that to the extent practical, the actual alignment of the railroad be done in a manner that minimizes the impact on present and future mining and geothermal related activities and property rights. Before DOE considers moving any sections of the alignment, the businesses and residents should be thoroughly polled to get an even consensus of the impact upon the Esmeralda communities. The Goldfield route appears to be an acceptable route but unlike Silver Peak the Goldfield area currently does not have any mining operations that would benefit from a shared use rail. However, DOE should consider moving any sections of the alignment near Goldfield to the far west to ensure for any future explorations, development and mining of the mineralized lands and orderly community expansion. We wish to bring to your attention that some of the residents of Silver Peak are very sensitive towards a rail going through or near Silver Peak. Consequently, DOE should consider all alternatives to the section of the proposed alignment near Silver Peak to allow for the least amount of impact on private property and citizens of that community.

Esmeralda County has passed resolutions in support of direct sale of lands identified by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for disposal for community expansion as described in the 1997 Tonopah Resource Management Plan. Some of these areas lie close or within the proposed rail corridor and BLM Land withdrawal. Any delay caused in the withdrawal of these lands will have a

detrimental effect on our economy and efforts to achieve our goal of achieving private ownership to create a property tax base sufficient to sustain Esmeralda County.

The DOE should evaluate the impacts and benefits associated with locating support facilities for the transportation system and for the construction and operation of the repository in Esmeralda County. Examples of these operations we believe should be located in Esmeralda County including training centers for local emergency response personnel, communications infrastructure, maintenance and construction support systems, and the production or manufacturing of components needed for the development of the railroad. The water resources of Esmeralda County are of utmost importance to the County and its residents. DOE must guarantee Esmeralda County that water resources will be used solely to benefit construction and operation of the rail. All water resource rights shall wrest with Esmeralda County and are not be used for mitigation with any government agencies other than Esmeralda County.

The DOE should consider all means to maximize positive economic impacts to Esmeralda County from the rail line and transportation system. The Esmeralda County Board of Commissioners encourages DOE to work directly with the local communities impacted by the rail line and their elected officials to identify associated economic opportunities.

Esmeralda County strongly supports shared use of the rail line for commercial shipping. Consequently, Esmeralda County wants to be assured DOE will meet all specifications required by the National Surface Transportation Board (STB) in order to make the rail road available for commercial shipping. Further, Esmeralda County is favorable to either the Caliente or Mina route to be a through going rail line with a southern connection into southern Nevada and California. A through-going route may offer considerable economic benefit to current and future business in the Fallon to Reno corridor as well as all counties and communities within Nevada up and down the proposed corridor from the north to southern Nevada.

Esmeralda County should be given the opportunity to work with DOE in planning the transportation system, particularly to provide input on the following:

- Resource impacts;
- Design and mitigation of roadway and utility crossings within the proposed alignment with warning and safety system associated therewith;
- Emergency Management;
- Project water quantity requirements;
- Air quality;
- Fencing along the rail route;
- Possible commodities that could be shipped on the rail line by local communities if the decision were made to allow common carriage use;
- Local desires for operations of the rail line, including common carriage use;
- Availability and location of construction materials (aggregates, railroad ballast, water, etc.)
- Availability and location of construction support (workforce, equipment, commercial supplies, etc.);
- Options for the location of Construction camps;
- Options for developing access to work sites from existing roads;
- Intended purpose and location for rail sidings and switching systems to enable local shipping;
- Economic factors that may affect alignment decisions;

Esmeralda County looks forward to working constructively with DOE on this important national project. We request that you carefully consider options that maximize economic opportunity for our communities and minimize health and safety impacts to our residents.

Sincerely,

R. J. Gillum,
Chairman

Nancy Boland
Commissioner

William Kirby
Vice Chairman