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June 1, 2004

Ms. Robin Sweeney
EIS Document Manager
Office of Transportation
Office of Civilian radioactive Waste Management
US Department of Energy
1551 Hillshire Drive, M/S 011
Las Vegas, Nevada 89134

RE: Comments on the Scope of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Alignment, Construction, and Operation of a Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada

Dear Ms. Sweeney:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DOE decision to construct and operate a rail line to Yucca Mountain. The Esmeralda County Commission Board approved the attached, "Resolution to Support Realignment of the Caliente Rail Line to a Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain in Nye County, Nevada" for submittal to DOE as comment on the proposed Caliente rail line 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 related property rights and mining economic activities. DOE should consider moving the section of alignment near Goldfield to the west to ensure the future exploration, development and mining of the mineralized lands.

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 that should be located in Esmeralda County include training centers for local emergency response personnel, communications infrastructure, and maintenance and construction support systems.

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 governments impacted by the rail line to identify associated economic opportunities.

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

- 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 work camps;
- Options for developing access to work sites from existing roads;
- Local desires for operations of the rail line, including common carriage use;
- Intended purpose and location for rail sidings;
- Economic factors that may affect alignment decisions;
- Possible commodities that could be shipped on the rail line by local communities if the decision were made to allow common carriage use;

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,

Ben Viljoen,
Chairman

1 RESOLUTION NO. _____
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4 **RESOLUTION OF THE ESMERALDA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY**
5 **COMMISSIONERS TO SUPPORT REALIGNMENT OF THE CALIENTE RAIL LINE**
6 **TO A GEOLOGIC REPOSITORY AT YUCCA MOUNTAIN IN NYE COUNTY,**
7 **NEVADA**
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9 WHEREAS, Esmeralda County is one of four local jurisdictions in Nevada that hosts the
10 Department of Energy (DOE) preferred rail line from Caliente, Nevada for the transportation of
11 high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel to a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain,
12 Nevada and;

13 WHEREAS, Esmeralda County intends to work constructively with the DOE and the
14 other jurisdictions along the Caliente rail route for the purpose of developing and implementing
15 policy which protects public safety, minimizes adverse economic impacts, and maximizes
16 economic opportunities associated and;

17 WHEREAS, the Caliente Rail Line crosses and obstructs the Goldfield District, a historic
18 high grade gold district in Esmeralda County that is currently being explored for large scale gold
19 production and;

20 WHEREAS, development of minerals in the Goldfield District is important to business
21 growth and job creation in Esmeralda County and;

22 WHEREAS, the alignment of the Caliente Rail Line can be adjusted to minimize the
23 impact on present and future mining related property rights, mineral exploration and mining
24 economic activities in Esmeralda County and;

25 WHEREAS, realigning the Caliente Rail Line to the west of Goldfield would promote
26 new mining and other commercial and industrial development operations in Esmeralda County
27 and would allow companies to ship commercial and industrial products and mineral ores at an
28 affordable cost and;

29 WHEREAS, new mining, warehousing, and federal contracting companies created in
30 Esmeralda County as a result of the rail line could become significant sources of employment and
31 tax revenue and;

32 NOW THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED, that the Esmeralda County Board of County
33 Commissioners supports the realignment of the Caliente Rail Line to the west of the Goldfield
34 District to ensure future commercial, industrial and mining development in its mineralized lands.

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36 PASSED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2004.

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ESMERALDA COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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BENJAMIN VILJOEN, CHAIRMAN

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R.J. GILLUM, VICE CHAIRMAN

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WILLIAM KIRBY, MEMBER

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50 ATTEST: _____
51 CLERK OF BOARD

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