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Groups release routes for nuclear waste

Report details rail, roads to Yucca Mountain

By [KEITH ROGERS](#)
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In hopes of bolstering out-of-state opposition to the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste project, a Nevada environmental group and several national affiliates released a report Tuesday that shows where trucks and trains hauling spent reactor fuel will pass through neighborhoods across the country.

The 63-page "Radioactive Roads and Rails" report by the national watchdog organization, U.S. Public Interest Research Group, found that transporting 77,000 tons of high-level nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain, 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, "poses serious risks to the health and safety of a large cross-section of Americans, as well as to the environment."

Members of the statewide environmental group, Citizen Alert, along with representatives from local chapters of U.S. PIRG, the National Environmental Trust, the Sierra Club, and Public Citizen released the report at a vacant lot across from the Clark County Government Center, not far from where freight trucks whisked toward the Spaghetti Bowl and rail lines pass along the downtown area.

"We have to capitalize on our unique facet of Nevada," said Dan Geary, the National Environmental Trust's Nevada spokesman. "Our friends and families are out there. It's so important to reach to the people where we come from," he said, referring to Nevadans' roots in other states.

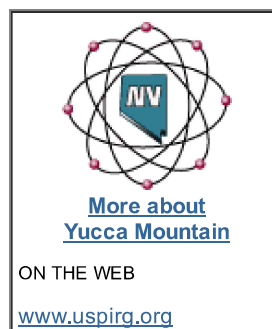
Citizen Alert Executive Director Peggy Maze Johnson claimed the Department of Energy hasn't done its homework in assessing potential impacts from tens of thousands of nuclear waste shipments across America's highways, waterways and railroad tracks.

She said the prospect for an endless schedule of nuclear waste shipments looms if the Senate overrides Gov. Kenny Guinn's veto of the Yucca Mountain Project in the next few weeks.

"Where's it going to be after Yucca Mountain?" she asked. "This is insanity. We have to stop creating nuclear waste until we can figure out what to do with that nuclear waste."

Energy Department officials had no immediate comment on the report.

The report, referencing Energy Department documents, says that waste shipments will be so frequent that many metropolitan areas will see potentially lethal radioactive cargo from commercial power plants moving daily through their communities.



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DOE officials project that during a 24-year shipping campaign, which is carried out through about 2035 according to the current schedule, about 16.4 million people would live within one-half mile of railroad routes, if rail is the most used transportation method.

If shipments occur mostly by truck, some 10.4 million people would live within one-half mile of those routes, according to DOE's estimate.

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