Informal Question and Answer Section (contd); TLG-0001

audiences much more than you: no threatening, shouting, profanity. This stuff happens. Finger pointing, or name calling. Any questions about how to do formal comment?

All right. Is there anybody who would like to give comment who has obligations at home? Sir, come on up.

TLG-0001 MR. BRIAN KELLY: My name is Brian Kelly. I live here in La Grande. My comments are pretty short and to the point.

But I guess the credibility question that I have is: Right now at Hanford we have this really huge environmental problem. And like the gentleman mentioned earlier, it's supposed to be cleaned up. **1**

And I just don't see the wisdom in adding to the problem until we get a handle on the problem we already have.

The other thing is we're talking about two of the lifelines to Eastern Oregon: one is the Columbia River, the other is the freeway. **2**

And I have a problem messing with either one of them, potentially, in terms of radioactive waste. And that's my comment.

TLG-0002

MR. DEE WILLIS: Ken Niles.

TLG-0002 MR. KEN NILES: Thank you, Dee. Good evening. My name is Ken Niles. I'm the assistant director for the Oregon Office of Energy for Nuclear Safety.

I wanted to make a couple of comments on the record to the Department of Energy on behalf of the agency. And also I had a couple of comments I wanted to make on transportation safety that -- some of the issues that Gerry brought up.

First off, it is a very extensive document. As you see up there, 3,000 pages; it's 21 pounds. We are still in the process of doing our analysis, and we will submit detailed comments probably just at the comment deadline.

We have requested an extension of the comment deadline. The Umatilla Tribe has requested an extension. Other entities have requested extensions. They have all been turned down.

1

We believe that -- we're disappointed in this action by the Department of Energy. It's not Mike's personal choice to do that, or decision.

TLG-0002 (contd)

We believe the government exists to serve its citizens; and we believe that in this case, the Federal Government through the U.S. Department of Energy is not serving its citizens. 1

We believe that they have instituted artificial deadlines and a false sense of urgency and believe that there is really no legitimate reason why we cannot have an extension. The extension that we've requested.

Oregon's congressional delegation is working on a letter. And, Wayne, I don't know if you have an update as to whether that letter has gone out.

But I know our congressional delegation is in support of an extension. So we hope that the Department of Energy will reconsider.

As Dennis mentioned, we also commend the Department of Energy for greatly improving this document. It was a mess a year ago. It frankly did not do what it was supposed to do. 2

And it has come a long way since then. It's still not all the way, and we still have some concerns.

TLG-0002 (contd)

We don't believe that it's still fully comprehensive in terms of looking at all the impacts from all the historic waste disposal practices that have been going on at Hanford since the early to mid 1940's.

We don't believe it takes into account all the different waste streams at Hanford that some of the buried wastes, some of the wastes that will be left in the tanks. **3**

And without that, we don't believe there is a comprehensive way to really look at what the impacts are.

So without knowing what the impacts have been, we don't believe it's possible to tell what the added increment of impact will be.

And we would like to see a more comprehensive, encompassing analysis of what those impacts have been.

We're troubled by assumptions that the Environmental Impact Statement makes that groundwater at Hanford will eventually be allowed to continue to be contaminated to levels that we consider to be unacceptable. **4**

And, again, without knowing what

TLG-0002 (contd)

this increment is, we can't tell when we might
4 reach the level of how much more waste can be
disposed there safely before you reach these
unacceptable levels. So we believe that is a
shortcoming as well in the document.

We're also troubled by the entire
process. In 1999, the Federal Government did a
national Environmental Impact Statement, they
said "Hanford and the Nevada test site are our
choices for places to dispose of large amounts
of mixed low-level radioactive waste and
5 low-level radioactive waste."

And that there would be
site-specific analysis to basically affirm that
that was the right decision to make.

And instead, as we read this, we see
that this Environmental Impact Statement
doesn't necessarily validate that decision. It
assumes that was the correct decision. In
making that assumption, then it looks only at
disposing of waste at Hanford.

We're not naive. We know that there
will be additional waste that is disposed at
Hanford, both generated on-site, and waste that
will come to Hanford.

TLG-0002 (contd)

And we will clearly, in our written comments, list our expectations for how the Department of Energy should dispose of that waste.

We will urge the U.S. Department of Energy to adopt a defense, in-depth system, which must include line disposal trenches, which Mike says they're favoring now; extensive environmental monitoring at the points; and performance criteria for the waste form, the capping system and the disposal sites. 6

And, again, it's very difficult at this point, given the volume of that document, to make a lot of detailed comments at this point.

Dennis said his conclusion at this point that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency made is that they believe this analysis is good enough for the U.S. Department of Energy to go ahead and make their decisions.

We're not to that point yet. We may be by the time we finish our analysis, but we're not to that point yet.

I would like to talk briefly about transportation. And actually, Dee, if you'll

TLG-0002 (contd)

permit me, this is more a message for you folks than necessarily for the Department of Energy.

Gerry made a lot of comments. There's other that have made a lot of comments. And quite frankly, and Gerry knows this, we don't agree entirely with everything he says.

I, for the most part, am the state official that is responsible for the safe transport of radioactive materials through the state of Oregon. And I've been working on this issue since 1992.

And the state has been working on it pretty heavily since 1982. That's when we began to institute a permitting process for radioactive material shipments.

That's when we began to track the shipments and to try to work with the Federal Government to do some things, to get some safeguards in to make these shipments as safe as we can.

I'm going to give you a couple of numbers in a moment. And I think you're going to be surprised by them.

But let me also give you the perspective from the state of Oregon, so you

TLG-0002 (contd)

know where I'm coming from when I make these statements.

About 20 years ago when the state decided that Hanford cleanup was vital, that it was very important to protect the Columbia River, we did that knowing that cleanup at Hanford will result in an increase of radioactive materials. We knew that would be part of the trade-off for cleanup at Hanford.

It doesn't mean we accept tens of thousands of more shipments going to Hanford. It doesn't mean that we accept all of these potential shipments going to Hanford.

But what it does mean is the state's official position that the transport of radioactive materials can occur safely if state and Federal regulations are met.

And in some cases, with other shipments, some of these transuranic waste shipments, actually all the transuranic waste shipments, other high activity shipments, we asked for the Federal Government to do more than just meet the minimum requirements.

And since 1988, Oregon, along with all the western states, have negotiated as a

TLG-0002 (contd)

group with the U.S. Department of Energy.

And we have gotten a lot of those commitments for things such as keeping the trucks off the road when the weather is bad and tracking these shipments and requiring the best drivers and the best trucking companies.

It doesn't mean it covers all these shipments. It doesn't cover the low-level waste shipments. It does cover the higher activity shipments.

Since the state of Oregon began tracking radioactive material shipments through the state, in 1982 we have had about 15,000 truckloads of radioactive waste travel through the state.

More than half of those on Interstate 84 through your area. And that's a lot of shipments that we've seen in the past. And I would be surprised if any of you had any idea we've seen that level of shipments.

In 1982 when we began tracking, we had 2,000 shipments that year. We're down now, and it varies wildly, between 3- to 6- or 700 shipments a year. Still going on the freeway.

TLG-0002 (contd)

It's not all connected with the U.S. Department of Energy. There's a commercial low-level waste disposal dump up there as well.

15,000 shipments we've had, 21 years, we've had seven incidents involving those shipments. One that you would call a pretty serious accident, a rollover. The other pretty minor. In none of those cases did we have a release of radioactive materials.

So I just want to give you just a little perspective. We work very closely with the HAZ-MAT teams, the fire departments throughout the state. We're going to go tomorrow and talk to the folks at La Grande as well.

We have provided them equipment, we provided them with training, we provided them with shipment information about what's coming up, what they can expect to see.

And periodically we call these folks and we say, "Do you have what you need? Do you have the equipment, do you have the information, do you have the training?"

And if they say "No," we say "What does it take to get you what you need?" We do

TLG-0002 (contd); TLG-0003

that, and I'm making the commitment we will continue to do that because we do take this seriously.

I don't want people to get the thought that these trucks are just driving willy-nilly through the state of Oregon and nobody's looking at them at all.

So if there are questions about that, I'm not sure what the format may do a little bit later. Dee said we may get into Q&A. If there are questions about that, I'd be glad to try and answer them. Thank you.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Thanks, Ken.

So where are you now? Are you bursting with questions? Or are you willing to hear a few more comments before we go to discussion?

Let's get a couple more comments. If I read your name and you want to wait and hear more discussion and comment later, just say "pass," okay. Dwight Dill.

TLG-0003 MR. DWIGHT DILL: I'll try and be brief. I'm Dwight Dill from La Grande. I have -- echo a lot of, probably, the same concerns we've heard.

TLG-0003 (contd)

Interstate 84, as we all know, the two worst portions of Interstate 84 are directly to the east, directly to the west of La Grande. I have concerns that we're looking at year-round shipment of wastes through that area. 1

I travel that highway pretty regularly, several times a month under -- year-round, and that's not a road I'd want to be on with those shipments beside me.

I also have concerns that we're bringing more waste into Hanford when we haven't dealt with the problems that currently exist there. 2

There's groundwater contamination, there's contamination in the Columbia River. Columbia River is a vital economic, cultural, and recreational resource for both La Grande -- or both Oregon and Washington. Continued contamination of that puts all those activities at risk. 3

I also have concerns that with -- I've lost my train of thought, I apologize. But those are my two major concerns.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Mark

TLG-0004

Tipperman, did I get that right? Give us your name in your own voice.

TLG-0004 MR. MARK TIPPERMAN: My name, in my own voice, Mark Tipperman. I'll also be brief. And the main reason I'm going to be brief is that there just really wasn't enough time to get prepared for this meeting. I only learned of it in the last few days.

Certainly I didn't have time to read through all 3,000 pages, or even get a good summary or a set of bullet points. So for those reasons, I'm going to be brief.

And my first gripe is that the comment period for this EIS and the distribution of the revised EIS and notice of this meeting, I think was truly inadequate. And I think that without adequate comment, it makes a mockery of the NEPA process. **1**

And so I would certainly commend additional time for this purpose. And I would hope that the DOE would change its position on that.

My second thing is just really a reflection. Something I observed the other day. I was watching CNN.

TLG-0004 (contd)

And they had a picture of some 55 gallon metal drums outside a facility of some kind in Iraq. And the description was that these were some of the drums that contained radioactive water from some kind of nuclear facility in Iraq and how people in the area had carted off these drums to use in their homes.

And I said to myself, initially, "Wow, look at that. Look how backwards they are. Look at all these hazards that they seem to have no way of containing."

And then I thought, as this meeting came up, "We're really not much further advanced. We're really not much further along than they are."

We have all kinds of assumptions about how our technology and our models and our sciences, if going to provide us with an answer -- with a magic bullet. But really the problem of nuclear material is one that, at least at this point, is insurmountable.

We have an industry, we have a government agency that generates nuclear waste and hazardous waste on a scale that certainly

TLG-0004 (contd)

we're in no position to deal with and haven't demonstrated by anything we've done in the past, and ability to deal with in the future.

So I would echo what other people have said, which is: Until we know that we actually can deal with the waste that we have there, and we can deal with it in a way where conditions don't get worse but actually improve, we shouldn't be accepting any more waste. **2**

And I can't say exactly what's in that revised EIS, but I don't understand how DOE can propose to go forward with this addressing the impacts that have been brought to bear upon the fisheries downstream and the recreational users downstream, when I don't think they're really aware of what those impacts are.

And certainly from what I've read in the summary, there doesn't seem to be even a proposal under consideration that would adequately address the water quality impacts from what they're proposing to do with monitoring stations located a mile away from the sites at which they plan disposal. **3**

TLG-0004 (contd); TLG-0005

I'm hard pressed to see how that can give an accurate picture of what's actually leaching through the ground and into the environment.

3

Because as we know, much of this waste has a lifespan that extends many, even hundreds, of generations from today. And we have to look at this from a really long-term perspective that we don't have to examine some of our other concerns. Thank you.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Sandra Roth.

TLG-0005 MS. SANDRA ROTH: Sandra Roth. I'm going to keep it real short. I haven't had a chance at all to see the EIS.

Shelley and I work together every day. And I've heard tons of information about it, so I'm here to speak.

1

I just want to let you know, Hanford has enough. It's got so much stuff up there and we can't deal with what we have. And why are we adding more?

And after hearing this on a day-to-day saga, I can tell you that we need to deal with what we have.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Owen Kenton.