

1 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
2 OFFICE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY
3 OFFICE OF FUEL CYCLE MANAGEMENT
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7 GLOBAL NUCLEAR ENERGY PARTNERSHIP
8 PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
9 PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
10 February 26, 2007
11 6:00 p.m.
12 5101 N. Lovington-Hobbs Highway
13 Hobbs, New Mexico
14

11 HELD BEFORE:

12 Hearing Officer Richard Black,
13 Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary
14 Office of Nuclear Energy

15 Holmes Brown, Facilitator
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22 REPORTED BY: DEBORAH L. O'CONNOR, RPR, CRR, CCR #297
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25 (3622B) DEB

1 MR. BROWN: Good evening. Welcome to this
2 public scoping meeting on the Programmatic
3 Environmental Impact Statement for the Global
4 Nuclear Energy Partnership. The development of an
5 Environmental Impact Statement for this project by
6 the Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy
7 is required by the National Environmental Policy
8 Act.

9 My name is Holmes Brown. I will serve as
10 facilitator for this event. My role is to insure
11 this meeting runs on schedule and that everybody has
12 an opportunity to speak. I'm not an employee of the
13 Department of Energy nor an advocate for any party
14 or position.

15 At the registration table you should have
16 received a participant's packet. If not, please
17 raise your hand so staff can bring you one. Is
18 anybody missing a packet? Okay. We've actually got
19 a few up here. It contains important information on
20 the presentation and is a convenient place to take
21 notes during the briefing that will follow in a few
22 minutes.

23 There are three purposes for tonight's
24 meeting. First, to provide information on the
25 content of the proposed Programmatic Environmental

1 Impact Statement and on the National Environmental
2 Policy Act which governs the process. Secondly, to
3 answer your questions about the proposed PEIS and
4 the NEPA. And, third, to receive and record your
5 formal comments on the scope of the proposed PEIS.

6 Tonight's agenda reflects these three
7 purposes. We will begin with a video presentation
8 by Dennis Spurgeon, who is assistant secretary for
9 nuclear energy for the Department of Energy. Next
10 we will hear a presentation from Mr. Dick Black
11 regarding the proposed Programmatic Environmental
12 Impact Statement.

13 To answer your questions, project staff
14 will be available throughout the afternoon -- I'm
15 sorry, the evening at the display tables. They can
16 discuss the proposed PEIS and the NEPA process, the
17 contents of the printed materials available on
18 display, and the contents of Mr. Black's
19 presentation.

20 Following Mr. Black's presentation, we
21 will recess so that the public may pursue further
22 questions with available project staff. Once we
23 reconvene, the court reporter will be available to
24 receive your comments and suggestions regarding the
25 scope of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership

1 proposed PEIS. All of your comments will be
2 transcribed and made part of the permanent record.
3 We'll begin with a video presentation by DOE's
4 Dennis Spurgeon.

5 (A videotape was played.)

6 MR. BROWN: I'm now pleased to introduce
7 Mr. Richard Black, the associate deputy assistant
8 secretary for nuclear energy for the Department of
9 Energy. He will discuss the background of the
10 project and the purpose and basic elements of the
11 proposed Programmatic Environmental Impact
12 Statement.

13 MR. BLACK: Thank you, Holmes, and good
14 evening, ladies and gentlemen. I am pleased to be
15 here tonight to welcome you to the department's
16 public scoping meeting for the Global Nuclear Energy
17 Partnership. As Assistant Secretary Spurgeon
18 indicated, this meeting is for you as members of the
19 public to give us your comments, your suggestions,
20 your statements of what impact these proposed
21 facilities might have on you, your community, and
22 your surrounding environment. And so from that
23 perspective, your comments, your statements are
24 very, very important to us as we start this process
25 for looking at proposed sites for these GNEP

1 facilities that I'll talk about later.

2 We are here today because local
3 organizations specifically here at the Eddy-Lea
4 Energy Alliance responded to a request by DOE in
5 August of 2006 to find out what public or commercial
6 entities would be interested in hosting facilities
7 that support the GNEP proposal and would be willing
8 to conduct further siting studies to help us make a
9 decision. You are one of 13 communities -- 11
10 responded but 13 were selected by DOE for further
11 study, and I'll show you those communities later.
12 But you are one of those that will be -- that will
13 conduct further siting studies, and your statements
14 tonight will help us in that analysis.

15 Before we provide you an opportunity to
16 make statements, let me describe how we wish to
17 proceed tonight. First I would like to give you
18 just a little nuclear 101, nuclear power basics, on
19 spent fuel management, and then I'd like to tell you
20 how the NEPA process helps us in making the
21 decisions that we have to make with respect to the
22 GNEP proposal. And I'd like to talk a little bit
23 about that GNEP proposal, its goals and its
24 objectives, the proposed facilities that could
25 possibly be located here and other sites in the

1 United States, and how the programmatic
2 environmental process will help us make those
3 decisions for the GNEP.

4 Nuclear power. Nuclear power in the
5 United States now provides about 20 percent of the
6 power. Power reactors, as Assistant Secretary
7 Spurgeon said, do not emit air pollution or
8 greenhouse gases and, basically, they provide
9 70 percent of the emission-free electricity in the
10 United States. Most of the remaining is hydro, a
11 little bit of wind, a little bit of solar.

12 A typical commercial nuclear power plant
13 generates electricity by the fissioning -- splitting
14 of uranium that's in this uranium fuel right here.
15 When the control rods are removed from the core, the
16 fissioning process starts. The fissioning process
17 with the splitting of the uranium creates tremendous
18 heat. The heat then is transferred to water that's
19 in the reactor core, the water then circulates over
20 to this steam generator. The boiling water then
21 creates steam. The steam then is under high
22 pressure, very high temperature and high pressure,
23 and goes over to a turbine. The turbine -- the
24 steam turns the turbine and in turn the turbine
25 turns the generator to make electricity. That's

1 basic -- nuclear basics 101.

2 After completing an operating cycle,
3 typically 18 to 24 months, some of the uranium fuel
4 is considered used or spent and must be replaced
5 with fresh fuel. As Assistant Secretary Spurgeon
6 said, we have now a process in the United States and
7 several other countries as well where we have a
8 once-through spent fuel management. In other words,
9 the fuel goes once through the core and when it's
10 used up, it's removed from the core, stored on site
11 in spent fuel pools or in dry cast storage, and then
12 ultimately when it cools down in the case
13 sufficiently, it will be moved to permanent disposal
14 at a geologic repository.

15 The GNEP proposal wants to do something
16 else. We want to recycle that spent fuel. It has a
17 lot of energy and it makes sense to recycle it, as
18 Assistant Secretary Spurgeon says, as it makes sense
19 to recycle a lot of other products that we have in
20 the United States, to separate out of the waste and
21 use the components that can be reused.

22 What compels us at this time to propose
23 GNEP? Well, we expect worldwide demand for
24 electricity to expand or -- expect it to
25 approximately double by 2030. As you can well

1 imagine, just looking at countries such as China and
2 India where their huge, expanding economies, their
3 need for electricity is greatly expanding as well.
4 And we are pursuing GNEP because we want to increase
5 energy from diverse sources in ways that protect and
6 improve the environment and enhance our nation's
7 energy security.

8 How is the NEPA process going to help us
9 in this? Well, NEPA requires -- the National
10 Environmental Policy Act requires consideration of
11 potential environmental impacts of proposed actions
12 as well as reasonable alternatives to those proposed
13 actions. As we've indicated, your involvement, your
14 public involvement, in this is crucial for us to
15 make a fully informed and complete decision.

16 Now, we document those decisions, and part
17 of that decision in an Environmental Impact
18 Statement. It is required for any major federal
19 action that may significantly affect the quality of
20 the human environment. And a Programmatic
21 Environmental Statement is used in cases such as
22 GNEP where we have broad things that were
23 considered. Here we have multiple facilities at
24 multiple sites and we have both domestic and
25 international implications in the GNEP mission and

1 the goal of GNEP.

2 Where are we in the process? Here are
3 some of the things we've done already starting in
4 March of 2006 with advanced notice of intent, notice
5 of intent in January of 2007. Now we're in the
6 public scoping process. Ultimately we're going to
7 issue a draft Programmatic Environmental Impact
8 Statement. Your statements here tonight will be
9 considered in issuing that draft. But that draft
10 will also be available for public comment in the
11 fall of 2007. So you do have another opportunity to
12 provide us comments on impacts as well as reasonable
13 alternatives. Ultimately we'll issue a final
14 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and the
15 secretary will issue a record of decision now
16 contemplated for the summer of 2008.

17 What is the purpose of the GNEP PEIS? We
18 want to assess reasonable alternatives that
19 encourage expansion of nuclear energy worldwide as
20 well as domestically, we want to reduce nuclear
21 proliferation risks, and we want to reduce the
22 volume, the thermal output, and the radiotoxicity of
23 spent fuel before it will go to permanent disposal
24 in the geologic repository.

25 What are the domestic programmatic

1 alternatives that we will be considering with
2 respect to GNEP? Well, the first alternative that
3 we will be looking at -- remember Assistant
4 Secretary Spurgeon said we are just starting this
5 process. We have a long way to go, but we are
6 really just at the start of this process to consider
7 the GNEP alternatives that we must consider. But
8 one of the things that we will be considering is
9 does this make sense and can we do it. And if it
10 doesn't make sense and we can't do it, then what we
11 will do is we will continue to use the once-through
12 cycle for spent fuel management. That will mean
13 that 103 operating reactors in the domestic United
14 States, they will pull the fuel from their core,
15 store it on site when it makes sense, and when they
16 can safely remove it to a geologic repository, which
17 right now is Yucca Mountain, when that gets licensed
18 and it is safe to move fuel there, we will do that.
19 But we will also continue to do further research in
20 the nuclear fuel cycle.

21 The alternative -- the other programmatic
22 alternative that we will be considering is the GNEP
23 proposed action. It's the broad implementation of a
24 closed fuel cycle that can include one or more fuel
25 recycling centers and one or more advanced recycling

1 reactors.

2 And with respect to the second one, I'll
3 tell you what we're going to be considering in the
4 slides coming up. DOE is evaluating three fuel
5 recycling facilities to support the GNEP. The first
6 one is a nuclear fuel recycling center. This center
7 will separate spent fuel in through its reusable
8 uranium and transuranics, which are neptunium,
9 plutonium, americium, and curium, and its
10 nonreusable constituents, waste, without separating
11 out pure plutonium. Without separating out pure
12 plutonium is a way that we can reduce proliferation
13 risk because pure plutonium is weapons grade
14 material and it could be used without too much
15 further processing to build a potential nuclear
16 bomb. So we don't want to go that option. We want
17 to reduce the proliferation risk, so we will not be
18 separating out pure plutonium.

19 The recycling center will also fabricate
20 fuel from the transuranics for use in the advanced
21 recycling reactor. We will analyze alternative
22 technologies and alternative spent fuel throughputs
23 for this recycling center ranging from a hundred to
24 3,000 metric tons annually. And in some of your
25 materials that were handed out, you'll see what

1 those different throughputs will do for spent fuel
2 management in the United States.

3 The next facility is the advanced
4 recycling reactor. This reactor is going to be
5 based on a different technology than the current
6 light water reactors in use commercially in the
7 United States, and it will be designed to destroy
8 the transuranics while at the same time generate
9 electricity. So the thought is that we will
10 fabricate transuranic fuel at the recycling center,
11 it will be moved to the recycling center where it
12 will be burned up and consumed and at the same time
13 produce electricity. That spent fuel moved out of
14 that reactor will then go back to the recycling
15 center and it will be recycled. Again, this is the
16 closed recycling loop that we talked about for spent
17 fuel management.

18 The proposed technology is the sodium
19 cooled fast reactor. We mention this to let you
20 know that we've had experience here in the United
21 States with this type of reactor and they've had
22 experience internationally with this type of reactor
23 and it will be an advanced technology. And for this
24 particular reactor we will analyze alternative power
25 ratings from 250 to 2,000 megawatts thermal. And

1 the footnote basically says these two facilities
2 could be privately owned and operated as a
3 commercial enterprise, for profit, potentially with
4 government-supplied incentives or seed money or
5 whatever you may want to talk about or other
6 involvement yet to be determined. Basically, as I
7 said, these could be potentially commercially
8 operated facilities and -- but those await some
9 further economic studies, which I'll talk about a
10 little bit later.

11 The last facility that is included in the
12 GNEP domestic proposal is the advanced fuel cycle
13 research facility. This will support research and
14 development relating to separation technologies.
15 What is the best way to do the separation of the
16 energy from the spent fuel of the reusable versus
17 the nonusable constituents of the spent fuel? And
18 there's various technologies that we're looking at,
19 and also we'll be looking at research on fuel
20 fabrication for the fast reactor transmutation fuel.
21 It will also do long-term research and development
22 on advanced fuel cycle technologies. It's important
23 to note that this research facility would be built
24 and operated at a DOE site and would not be a
25 commercial facility.

1 Now here are the 13 sites that I mentioned
2 previously. Here are the DOE sites that we're
3 considering for one or more of these facilities and
4 here are the non-DOE sites. There's Hobbs,
5 New Mexico, that we will consider for the two
6 facilities that I previously mentioned, not the
7 research facility. We will be using a screening
8 process to determine which sites can be reasonable
9 alternatives for one or more of these facilities and
10 we will -- and if a site, for instance, doesn't have
11 the right site characteristics that we're looking
12 for, it will be screened out and we will not do any
13 further analysis of that. But that's something that
14 we will be scoping out very shortly.

15 Now here are the 13 sites under
16 consideration, and here are the facilities that we
17 will be looking at. You can see in Hobbs we'll be
18 looking at the recycling center as well as it being
19 a site for the advanced recycling reactor. And here
20 are some things I talked about.

21 What are the international GNEP
22 initiatives? We will be working with our partner
23 nations, partner nation being those, I think, five
24 or six other countries that have advanced nuclear
25 technologies. We will be working with them to

1 develop both the fuel services program and a reactor
2 program. The fuel services program will assure the
3 availability of nuclear fuel to those nations that
4 want the nuclear option but will agree to refrain
5 from pursuing uranium enrichment and reprocessing
6 programs. And you know that uranium enrichment as
7 well as reprocessing programs are the programs that
8 could lead to potential nuclear weapons. And so we
9 want nations that go with the nuclear option to
10 refrain from that.

11 The reactor program is that these other
12 nations want reactors to fuel their electrical
13 energy needs for their expanding economies but they
14 need a right-sized reactor. They need a secure
15 reactor. They need a right-sized reactor. They
16 probably would like a modular reactor where a lot of
17 the components might be able to be fabricated off
18 site, in which case the United States as well as
19 other nations are pursuing what we call these safe,
20 secure right-size reactors that we will deploy to
21 these nations who agree to the fuel services
22 program -- fuel management program. We're not
23 proposing any specific action with respect to these
24 international initiatives at this time, but the
25 programmatic EIS will look at it only in a very

1 general, qualitative manner to determine what the
2 potential impacts might be.

3 Here are some of the environmental issues
4 that DOE will be considering with respect to each of
5 the sites. They range from effects on people to
6 effects on land to effects on property to effects on
7 the socioeconomic infrastructure of the community.
8 As you can see, there is quite a wide range of
9 issues that we will be considering. And also we
10 have found, as we've gone through these scoping
11 meetings, that you in the local communities also
12 have raised some very good issues that you think we
13 should consider because they do raise some local
14 impacts that we didn't consider initially. So
15 that's why we're encouraging you at this time to
16 raise those impacts to us that you feel might be
17 here at Hobbs.

18 DOE's record of decision, which I
19 indicated would be in June of 2008, that's the
20 current schedule, will determine whether to proceed
21 with the construction and operation of these GNEP
22 recycling facilities and, if so, we will address
23 what technologies and capacities to utilize and the
24 identification of those sites or locations that are
25 not screened out to begin with. DOE's decision will

1 be based on information from the PEIS as well as
2 other information. I mentioned before we're looking
3 at some economic studies. We're also looking at
4 some technology information as well as policy
5 considerations, both domestically and
6 internationally. So when the secretary makes a
7 decision whether to proceed or not, he or she will
8 have a full range of information by which to make a
9 fully informed decision, including your input.

10 How can you help us make a sound decision?
11 Provide comments, as we mentioned, identify
12 reasonable alternatives to what we're proposing, and
13 identify potentially significant environmental
14 issues that you feel we should consider with respect
15 to the PEIS. Continue to be informed. Here is a
16 web site that we have up and operating and it's
17 information rich. It will continue to be loaded up
18 with information as we continue this process.
19 Continue to be involved. Sign up for distribution
20 of the draft PEIS so that you can provide further
21 comments as warranted.

22 How to provide your comments. Here, you
23 can make them here tonight, both oral and written.
24 They will be recorded so that they can be available
25 for the -- for our record of decision. You can send

1 them by US mail, as indicated there, by e-mail,
2 telephone, and fax. The comment period for this
3 process right now that we're in for scoping public
4 ends April 4, 2007.

5 So I personally thank you for your
6 interest. Very good crowd here tonight. I
7 encourage your continued involvement and any
8 statements or suggestions that you make help us make
9 a good decision. Thank you.

10 MR. BROWN: Thank you. At this time we're
11 going to take a break to allow you the opportunity
12 to browse the exhibits at the side of the room and
13 talk with available staff if you have further
14 questions. Also, I'd like to invite any media
15 representatives who would like to talk with Paul
16 Lisowski of the Department of Energy about GNEP to
17 see Rose Scott, who is at the very last table in the
18 back. She can arrange for you to talk with him
19 during this break.

20 I will make an announcement when we're
21 about to resume the formal portion of the meeting to
22 begin taking oral comments. If you would like to
23 provide oral comments and have not signed up yet,
24 please see the sign-up table in the lobby, and we
25 will call on you in the order in which you sign up.

1 So with that, we'll now take a break for a question
2 period. Thanks.

3 (A recess was taken from 6:37 to 6:53.)

4 MR. BROWN: Before we start I'd like to
5 comment on what a marvelous meeting facility you
6 have here. We hold meetings all over the country,
7 and I think you folks are the clear winner to date.
8 This is a marvelous place, and it's a real good
9 turnout tonight. So thanks again.

10 It's now time to receive your formal
11 comments on the scope of the proposed PEIS. This is
12 your opportunity to let DOE know what you would like
13 to see addressed in the draft document. The court
14 reporter will transcribe your comments. The court
15 reporter tonight is Debbie O'Connor.

16 Let me review a few brief ground rules for
17 the formal comments. Please step up to the
18 microphone over there and introduce yourself,
19 providing an organizational affiliation where
20 appropriate. If you have a written version of your
21 statement, please provide a copy to the court
22 reporter when you're finished. Also, if you have
23 any additional material that you would like to
24 include in the record but you're not planning to
25 read, you may also leave that with the court

1 reporter and it will be labeled and submitted to the
2 formal record.

3 I will call two names at a time, the first
4 of the speaker and the second of the person to
5 follow. In view of the number of folks who have
6 signed up to speak tonight, I think we will have a
7 five-minute rule. I will let you know when you have
8 a minute left so that you can summarize any
9 remaining comments.

10 Mr. Black will be serving as the hearing
11 officer for the Department of Energy this evening.
12 He will not be responding to any questions or
13 comments during this session. So that by way of
14 introduction, let me get started. Our first speaker
15 is Johnny Cope. And Johnny will be followed by Gary
16 Schubert.

17 MR. COPE: Good evening.

18 MR. BROWN: Welcome.

19 MR. COPE: Welcome to Lea County. We're
20 awful proud you're here tonight and I think it's a
21 very important mission for our country and so we
22 applaud your initiative. And why I asked to be the
23 first speaker, I think, is I'm the chairman of
24 Eddy-Lea Energy Alliance, and I'd like to just tell
25 you a little bit about who we are and how we got

1 here. And it's a New Mexico L.L.C. and there's four
2 members and it's Hobbs, Carlsbad, Eddy County, and
3 Lea County. And it had to be a resolution from each
4 of the entities to become a member of the L.L.C. and
5 so that required each commission -- there's five
6 member commissions in the county and seven in the
7 city, and I want to tell you that it was unanimous
8 from all the members. And so we have elected
9 officials that are totally in support of your
10 project and certainly they've got to stand for
11 re-election so, hopefully, you understand the
12 support that they are giving us. So we again thank
13 you for being here.

14 I do have -- in New Mexico we have our
15 legislature going and there's four members of the
16 legislature that I have letters from and certainly
17 would like to make those a part of the record.
18 Representative Don Bratton, Senator Carroll Leavell,
19 Senator Gay Kearnan and Representative Shirley
20 Tyler, and I would like to introduce -- or make
21 these part of the record if we could, please.

22 MR. BLACK: I'll give them to the court
23 reporter.

24 MR. COPE: I'd also like to state that my
25 business is an oil and gas business. That's what we

1 are. Our industry here in Lea County is pretty much
2 oil, gas. We understand safety. It's as dangerous
3 an industry as nuclear could be if it wasn't managed
4 right, and we want you to understand that this
5 community understands with a good training program
6 and safety that this project could be managed safely
7 in our area. And so we do it every day in our lives
8 in the oil and gas business, so certainly we would
9 like for you all to take that into consideration.
10 So thank you for allowing me to speak.

11 MR. BROWN: Thank you. Gary Schubert, and
12 he will be followed by Randall McCormick.

13 MR. SCHUBERT: Good evening. I'd like to
14 welcome you once again to Lea County. I'm Gary
15 Schubert, and I'm chairman of the Lea County
16 Commission. I appreciate your good words about our
17 facility. We're very proud of it, and I'll pass it
18 on to the people who caretake this facility that you
19 mentioned that. And we like to give them an attaboy
20 when we can, and we'll certainly do that.

21 I just want to convey to you that during
22 that project the Eddy-Lea Alliance has the complete,
23 wholehearted enthusiastic support of the Lea County
24 Commission. As Johnny said, this is a unanimous
25 effort on the part of the commission. We feel that

1 we're representing our citizens well. We feel that
2 the project is a viable, good project for the
3 country and also will be a good project for our
4 county, and we're happy to participate in the energy
5 business to the point that we do now and we look
6 forward to participating in this endeavor.

7 We feel that we're up to -- we know that
8 there will be some challenges in regards to the
9 construction and things that go here. We feel a
10 hundred percent committed to take on those
11 challenges and we're willing to do that and as I
12 said, once more I just want to voice the complete
13 support of the project from our Lea County
14 Commission. Thank you.

15 MR. BROWN: Thank you. Randall McCormick,
16 Stephanie Sparkman will be next.

17 MR. McCORMICK: Thank you all for coming
18 to Lea County. We appreciate the ability to and the
19 time to be able to get up in front of you and visit
20 and tell you what we're thinking.

21 In 1956 I moved to Lea County at the young
22 age of nine months old, and this has been my life,
23 Lea County has been. In 1983 I started a business
24 in Hobbs and right shortly after that oil prices
25 started dropping. And they dropped to almost

1 nothing in 1985. I have seen bumper stickers going
2 around Hobbs that said, "The last one out of Hobbs,
3 turn the lights out," and I remember those times.

4 And people ask me, they say, "Randy, why
5 do you work on projects like this? Why do you want
6 this economic development for Lea County?" I say
7 the reason that I want it is because I remember
8 those times and I remember the good times also. And
9 I think if we keep our economy diversified that
10 we'll always be on the growth. I support the GNEP
11 project and thank the DOE for coming here and
12 letting us tell you that we do.

13 MR. BROWN: Thank you. Hoxie Smith will
14 follow Stephanie.

15 MS. SPARKMAN: Good evening. My name is
16 Stephanie Sparkman and I am the spokesperson for the
17 Permian Basin Future Gen Task Force. We with the
18 Future Gen Task Force have recently gone through
19 exactly what's going on here. I want to say from
20 the task force standpoint that in the Permian Basin
21 we understand energy. Our foundation, of course, is
22 oil and gas, but we understand the need not only for
23 our communities here in the Permian Basin but also
24 for the nation to be able to diversify our domestic
25 energy resources.

1 I also am the executive director of the
2 Energy Technology Initiative located in the southern
3 part of the Permian Basin in Midland, and I have a
4 letter that I'd like to read into record.

5 "Please accept this letter as the Energy
6 Technology Initiative's ringing endorsement of the
7 Eddy-Lea Energy Alliance GNEP site characterization
8 effort. As the region and indeed the nation
9 transitions from an oil and gas economy to an energy
10 economy, one that will include numerous forms of
11 domestic energy sources, the border that once
12 differentiated the two states has continued to fade.
13 It is clear that the region encompassing west Texas
14 and southeastern New Mexico is quickly emerging as
15 the nation's new nuclear corridor, one component
16 that underscores the Permian Basin, USA, as
17 America's energy epicenter. But the existing and
18 planned nuclear efforts are only one example of why
19 this region shines as the best choice for GNEP.

20 "I am not aware of any other community in
21 the United States whose citizenry are as educated
22 and environmentally astute as those in the Permian
23 Basin, especially when it comes to nuclear energy.
24 As a region, we understand the need to expand
25 nuclear power to meet increasing energy demand

1 without air pollution.

2 "Like members of the Eddy-Lea Energy
3 Alliance, we at ETR are committed to helping reduce
4 the country's reliance on imported fossil fuels
5 while increasing reliance on domestic energy
6 sources. We applaud the Department of Energy's
7 efforts to demonstrate advanced technologies for
8 recycling spent nuclear fuel in a safe manner,
9 ensuring nuclear energy systems are used for
10 peaceful purposes.

11 "Realizing there is no greater threat to
12 America's overall security than our reliance on
13 foreign energy sources, we stand behind the GNEP
14 program and encourage the department to choose the
15 one site that has all the components to make it
16 successful, that site being located between Eddy and
17 Lea counties in New Mexico."

18 MR. BROWN: Hoxie Smith and Debra Hicks
19 will be next.

20 MR. SMITH: I'm Hoxie Smith. I'm the
21 director of the Petroleum Professional Development
22 Center at Midland College. I'm also the regional
23 Future Gen coordinator for Future Gen Texas,
24 representing the Odessa site in that Future Gen
25 initiative.

1 What I'd like to say this evening is that
2 certainly as a citizen of the Permian Basin, I also
3 would like to emphasize that we have so many
4 projects and so much opportunity here along what our
5 New Mexico friends like to refer to as the nuclear
6 corridor and what we like to refer to as the world's
7 energy epicenter. With Future Gen, with the heater
8 project at the University of Texas, the Permian
9 Basin just south of here, with the LES uranium
10 enrichment facility, the WIPP site, the waste
11 control specialists, we feel that there is a lot of
12 synergies between the different projects that are in
13 plan right now. We also see such a very large
14 opportunity for nuclear energy, nuclear electric
15 generation in safe reactors, and we feel that this
16 is the spot to locate such an initiative with GNEP.

17 So I just want to say that for the Permian
18 Basin, for the Texas side of the basin, we certainly
19 support the Eddy-Lea County Alliance in their
20 endeavor to bring this GNEP project to southeastern
21 New Mexico and we will do whatever we can to support
22 that effort. Thank you.

23 MR. BROWN: Thank you. Debra Hicks, and
24 then Bethe Cunningham will follow.

25 MS. HICKS: Thank you, Stephanie and

1 Hoxie. My name is Debra Hicks and I serve as the
2 chair of the board of directors of the Economic
3 Development Corporation of Lea County. As a
4 professional engineer and an owner of an engineering
5 firm in Hobbs, I understand the crucial nature of
6 your site studies. As chair of the EDC of Lea
7 County board of directors, I represent 122
8 certificate members, associate, ad hoc, all of which
9 are members here in Lea County that are committed to
10 furthering this region as the energy corridor of the
11 United States.

12 Having the possibility of a nuclear energy
13 facility in our area will improve the overall
14 portfolio of energy solutions to our region as well
15 as to our country. The Economic Development
16 Corporation of Lea County supports -- is in complete
17 support of the scope of your Programmatic
18 Environmental Impact Statement outlined in Section 7
19 of your Notice of Intent. Please know that the
20 Economic Development Corporation of Lea County
21 stands ready to assist the Department of Energy in
22 any way that we can. Thank you.

23 MR. BROWN: Thank you. Bethe Cunningham,
24 and Gary Dill would be next.

25 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you so much,

1 especially for pronouncing my name correctly. Thank
2 you. Welcome to eastern New Mexico. We're so happy
3 to have you here.

4 Again, I'm Bethe Cunningham, the president
5 and CEO of the Economic Development Corporation of
6 Lea County, and our nonprofit agency strongly
7 supports economic development in our region and
8 works diligently to aid new and expanding
9 businesses.

10 Having watched the steps involved in the
11 approval of the National Enrichment Facility, we
12 understand in this county that approval of the
13 location of the GNEP facility will take time and
14 careful consideration. The Economic Development
15 Corporation of Lea County is in full support of this
16 project. Please know that the EDC of Lea County
17 stands ready to assist the Department of Energy in
18 any way. Thank you so much.

19 MR. BROWN: Gary Dill, and Connie Sevier
20 is next.

21 MR. DILL: I'm Gary Dill, president of the
22 College of the Southwest, a regionally accredited
23 independent institution of higher education that
24 confers undergraduate degrees in the schools of
25 education, business, and arts and sciences and

1 master's degrees in education.

2 On behalf of the students, faculty, staff,
3 and board of trustees of the college, I am pleased
4 to express enthusiastic support for the Global
5 Energy Partnership. Our academic community is
6 particularly supportive of the initiatives related
7 to responsible recycling of nuclear fuels and
8 constructing of a nuclear reactor. We believe these
9 initiatives examples of good environmental
10 stewardship and are grounded in solid science and we
11 welcome the study.

12 MR. BROWN: Connie Sevier.

13 MS. SEVIER: I don't have a comment at
14 this time.

15 MR. BROWN: Thank you. Reserving the
16 right. Darwin Eubanks, and Robert Rhodes is signed
17 up after Darwin.

18 MR. EUBANKS: I feel a little bit
19 embarrassed because I don't have as prepared a
20 statement as my predecessors. What I'm going to say
21 comes from the heart.

22 I'm a born and bred Lea Countian. I work
23 in Carlsbad currently. I work for a company called
24 Budwine Service Electric. We're one of the
25 primary -- or the principals of Trico Power that's

1 going to be doing the electrical work out here at
2 the LES project. We're very proud to be part of the
3 community. We work hard to stay involved, and I
4 appreciate the opportunity to come here and speak
5 with you.

6 I personally drive a hybrid car. I
7 recycle aluminum cans. I try to throw away boxes or
8 take them to a recycle center, and all those things
9 take effort. I am an environmentalist. I'm an
10 environmentalist in favor of nuclear energy. I
11 think it is the way to go. I think it's the wave of
12 the future and the way to protect my children and
13 yours.

14 As a member of the IBEW, I'm very proud of
15 the fact that in Eunice, the IBEW, along with some
16 of the other international locals, are offering up
17 the opportunity to build a training facility in
18 Eunice in support of the LES project. It would be
19 an easy opportunity for the workforce to be
20 developed by LES and turned around and used over
21 here at the GNEP project, and that's what I hope
22 happens. Carlsbad has a lot to offer, and as
23 somebody that works every day in Carlsbad, there is
24 a certain sophistication that Carlsbad offers in
25 regard to the nuclear energy that is associated with

1 WIPP, but let's never forget Hobbs has that same
2 amount of sophistication, and welcome.

3 MR. BLACK: Thank you.

4 MR. BROWN: Thank you. Robert Rhodes, and
5 Nolan Brunson will follow.

6 MR. RHODES: My name is Robert Rhodes.
7 I'm with New Mexico Junior College. I want to first
8 extend Dr. McCleary's apologies for not being here
9 this evening. He regrettably had to be in Santa Fe
10 this evening, so he asked me to first bring up the
11 fact that New Mexico Junior College stands ready to
12 partner with all these entities here. And I think
13 the neat thing is, you look out here -- I've gone to
14 meetings over the last year since I've been here and
15 consistently see this type of turnout. We stand
16 ready to partner with everybody so that we could go
17 forward and make this a successful project.

18 The second thing is we at the institution
19 fully support this project. We understand that it's
20 important that we look for alternatives for our
21 energy consumption, and I think in Hobbs we begin to
22 do that much before the rest of the United States
23 has. We understand the need to do that and I think
24 you're in a community that really wants to step
25 forward and continue that leadership and we want to

1 fully partner with you to do that. We thank you for
2 taking this opportunity to have this hearing.

3 MR. BROWN: Thank you. Nolan Brunson.

4 MR. BRUNSON: Good evening. My name is
5 Nolan Brunson. I represent no one. I'm retired.
6 I've lived in Hobbs since the early '40s. I'm the
7 past president of -- past mayor of Hobbs, and I want
8 to assure you that you will find many folks here
9 that will be enthusiastic supporters of yours,
10 including myself and my family. We welcome you. We
11 are honored that you have chosen us as one of the
12 sites to look at and hope that you look at us
13 carefully and I know you will very thoroughly and we
14 welcome your inquiries. And if we could, any of us,
15 be of any assistance to you, please call us. Thank
16 you.

17 MR. BROWN: Thank you. That actually
18 concludes the list of folks who signed up to speak,
19 but at this point I will ask if anybody else would
20 like to make any comments. You're certainly welcome
21 to. If you're ready at this time, just please step
22 forward. We have a volunteer. Thank you. Again,
23 if you will just identify yourself for the court
24 reporter.

25 MS. BROOKS: Good evening. My name is

1 Brenda Brooks, and I'm the director of
2 communications and community affairs for Louisiana
3 Energy Services, National Enrichment Facility. LES
4 NEF fully supports the mission and scope of the GNEP
5 project. We understand the role that nuclear energy
6 plays in the security of not only our nation but in
7 the global situation. We have found the community
8 to be open and supportive of all efforts in this
9 area, and we would sincerely like to see you guys
10 consider this site. Thank you.

11 MR. BROWN: Is there anyone else who would
12 like to speak at this point? We are scheduled to
13 stay in session, actually, until 9:30 and what
14 customarily we do in a circumstance like this is we
15 will take a recess. Please feel free to look at
16 materials around the edge of the -- on the displays.
17 DOE and other staff are available to answer further
18 questions. And if anybody decides that they would
19 like to add comments, please see me. We will
20 reconvene and take your formal comments. So, again,
21 we will be in recess but anxious to reconvene if
22 someone has a comment to add. Thank you.

23 (A recess was taken from 7:15 to 7:34.)

24 MR. BROWN: If folks will take their
25 seats, we actually have some additional folks who

1 want to comment. In fact, you should count yourself
2 lucky that you stuck around. There was another
3 meeting that's adjourned. The mayor is here and a
4 number of other notables who will be making comments
5 and they'll be here in just a moment. So if you
6 folks will be seated, we'll have some additional
7 comments. I think I'm getting a list here in just a
8 moment.

9 Again, I'll just -- for the folks who have
10 just arrived, I'll say if they will step up to that
11 microphone over there and identify yourself and if
12 you have an organizational affiliation or title that
13 you would like included by the court reporter, you
14 can add that. I think our first speaker is
15 Commissioner John Boyd. Welcome. Glad you could
16 make it.

17 COMMISSIONER BOYD: Good evening. Welcome
18 to Hobbs, New Mexico. We're glad you're here. I'm
19 Commissioner John W. Boyd. I came to speak on
20 behalf of this project today because I want it to be
21 clear that we are an energy-producing county and we
22 do understand the dangers that we face every day in
23 the oil field and we are very prepared for this type
24 of situation. We do not take our work lightly and
25 we do understand the dangers that are involved

1 anytime you get into an energy-producing situation,
2 whether that would be nuclear, whether that would be
3 oil, whether that would be gas, we're always
4 prepared for these things.

5 I want you to know that I support this
6 project wholly. I look forward to working with
7 whoever we need to work with to get this project
8 moving forward and we're excited about it and I just
9 came to give you the support. I apologize for being
10 late, but we did have a city commission meeting and
11 we just got finished and I apologize for that.
12 Thank you.

13 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much. Our next
14 speaker is Mayor Monty Newman. Again, we are glad
15 you could join us.

16 MAYOR NEWMAN: Thank you very much. Like
17 the commissioner, let me formally welcome you to our
18 city. We're very pleased that you are here and we
19 welcome you and we are glad.

20 First of all, I would like to give to you
21 a resolution that was adopted by our city commission
22 in support of this project so that you'll have it in
23 writing so it could be entered into the record.

24 I won't take a lot of time, but I want to
25 give you a brief history about our community. In

1 the early, mid 1980s this community suffered a
2 significant decline in the oil and gas industry
3 along with the failure and collapse of the financial
4 services industry as well, the banking and S and L
5 business. We probably had a 50 percent decline in
6 property values, a 40 percent decline in rents, and
7 a significant drop in our workforce along with a
8 significant drop in our population.

9 As a result of that, we are a community
10 that is determined to grow and advance our ability
11 as a community to prove ourselves that we are
12 capable of being a community that's viable and
13 independent. And looking at that, we consider that
14 we've always thought about ourselves as in the oil
15 and gas business, which we are today and have been
16 in the past and it's been the cornerstone of who we
17 are.

18 However, today we also view ourselves in a
19 much broader context and that context is in the area
20 of energy. And we believe that we have a strong
21 coalition both with the cities and the counties
22 neighboring our state and the neighboring state of
23 Texas that understands this industry. We welcome
24 this industry, and we believe that it would be a
25 huge advancement both for our municipalities,

1 counties, and states but also to the nation as a
2 whole.

3 We're very interested in finding solutions
4 to the energy needs of this nation. We believe that
5 nuclear power and what it produces is one of those
6 commodities that would be beneficial. We do support
7 this for economic reasons, we support it for
8 national reasons, and we support it for security
9 reasons. And we believe that those three
10 well-founded within this community demonstrate our
11 commitment and our purpose for being here this
12 evening and we welcome you and thank you very much
13 for being here and I will be glad to answer any
14 questions that you might have.

15 MR. BROWN: Thanks very much. Both of
16 those statements are now included in the official
17 record, and we appreciate it very much. Again I'll
18 ask if there's anyone in the audience who would like
19 to make any further comments at this point. You're
20 certainly welcome, if you would like to, to step up
21 to the microphone. Again, if no one's prepared to
22 speak at this time, we will recess but remain
23 available to take comments through our scheduled
24 time to adjourn, which is 9:30. So, again, we'll
25 recess. Thanks very much.

1 (A recess was taken from 7:40 to 9:30.)

2 MR. BROWN: Reconvening this meeting on
3 the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership and asking if
4 there are any other members of the public who would
5 like to make a comment. Noting that no member of
6 the public has expressed an interest in providing
7 further comments and noting that the time is 9:30,
8 the official closing time for this meeting, this
9 meeting is officially adjourned.

10 (The proceedings concluded at 9:30 p.m.)

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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 I, DEBORAH L. O'CONNOR, New Mexico CCR #297, DO
3 HEREBY CERTIFY THAT ON February 26, 2007, the
4 proceedings in this matter were taken before me and I
5 did report in stenographic shorthand the proceedings
6 set forth herein and the foregoing is a true and
7 correct transcription of the proceedings had.

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Deborah L. O'Connor, RPR, CRR
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