George M. Hornberger, Chairman
Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Dr. Hornberger:

On November 19 – 21, 2002, ACNW held a transportation workshop that brought together representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy, several other federal agencies, and industry to discuss various aspects of spent fuel and high-level radioactive waste transportation. Conspicuously missing from the workshop’s agenda were experts from the state of Nevada, other states, or public interest groups – i.e., anyone who might bring a broader, albeit more critical, perspective to the issue. As a result, committee members and others attending the meeting were treated to a very one-sided and potentially skewed perspective on a matter that is of great importance, not only to the ACNW and NRC, but to the country as a whole.

To remedy this situation, I am proposing that, before the committee reports on this matter to the Commission, the state of Nevada be afforded the opportunity to organize a follow-up workshop at a future ACNW meeting for the purpose of providing the committee with views of transportation experts not employed by DOE or the nuclear industry. We would propose a one day session, with presentations on transportation policy and planning; cask safety/cask testing; security and safeguards; and public acceptance, risk, and risk perception.

With the transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste set to become a high profile and potentially volatile public issue as the Private Fuel Storage project in Utah moves towards fruition and plans for nuclear waste transportation associated with
the Yucca Mountain program begin to be more visible, the need for enhanced credibility on the part of organizations charged with assuring public health and safety in things nuclear becomes increasingly important. The type of meeting ACNW held on November 19th – 21st can only fuel public skepticism and distrust about government’s role in assuring the safety of such shipments and the apparently ‘cozy’ relationship between NRC, DOE, and the commercial nuclear industry.

I trust that this request for a follow-up transportation meeting to present information from parties excluded from the November workshop will be given favorable consideration. Please feel free to contact me to discuss the matter further and identify meeting possible dates.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Loux
Executive Director

RRL/cs
cc Governor Guinn
    Senator Harry Reid
    Senator John Ensign
    Rep. Shelly Berkley
    Rep. Jim Gibbons
    Richard Meserve, Chairman, NRC