
An Interview with

STEVE

BRADHURST

*An Oral History produced by
Robert D. McCracken*

Yucca Mountain Series

Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada

Tonopah
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CONTENTS

Preface	iv
Acknowledgments	vi
Introduction	viii
Introduction by Michael Voegele	xvi
CHAPTER ONE	1
CHAPTER TWO	15
CHAPTER THREE	31
CHAPTER FOUR	48
CHAPTER FIVE	56
CHAPTER SIX	68
CHAPTER SEVEN	83
CHAPTER EIGHT	97
CHAPTER NINE	109
ADDENDUM	118
INDEX	171

PREFACE

The Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) engages in interviewing people who can provide firsthand descriptions of the individuals, events, and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the recordings of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are *not* history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the NCTHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the NCTHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts, and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherence. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production.

While keeping alterations to a minimum the NCTHP will, in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the *uhs*, *ahs* and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;
- b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;

- c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;
- d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and
- e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from so many wonderful individuals. I was welcomed into many homes—in many cases as a stranger—and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. In a number of cases I had the opportunity to interview Nye County residents whom I have long known and admired; these experiences were especially gratifying. I thank the residents throughout Nye County and Nevada—too numerous to mention by name—who provided assistance, information, and photographs. They helped make the successful completion of this project possible.

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. “Bobby” Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project in 1987. Subsequently, Commissioners Richard L. Carver, Dave Hannigan, and Barbara J. Raper provided support. In this current round of interviews, Nye County Commissioners Butch Borasky, Lorinda A. Wichman, Joni Eastley, Gary Hollis, Fely Quitevis, and Dan Schinhofen provided unyielding support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave enthusiastic support and advocacy of the program within Nye County in its first years. More recently, Darrell Lacy, Director, Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office, gave his strong support. The United States Department of Energy, through Mr. Lacy’s office, provided funds for subsequent rounds of interviews. Thanks are extended to Commissioners Eastley and Hollis and to Mr. Lacy for their input regarding the conduct of this research and for serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. These interviews would never have become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Lacy.

Jean Charney served as editor and administrative assistant throughout the project; her services have been indispensable. Valerie Brown, Jean Charney, Robert B. Clark, Anna Lee Halsig, Debra Ann MacEachen, Lynn E. Riedesel, and Marcella Wilkinson transcribed a number of interviews, as did the staff of Pioneer Transcription Services in Penn Valley, California. Julie Lancaster and Suzy McCoy provided project coordination. Proofreading, editing, and indexing were provided at various times by Marilyn Anderson, Joni Eastley, Michael Haldeman, Julie Lancaster, Teri Jurgens Lefever, and Darlene Morse. Joni Eastley proofed most of the manuscripts and double-checked, as accurately as possible, the spelling of people's names and the names of their children and other relatives. Jeanne Sharp Howerton provided digital services and consultation. Eva La Rue and Angela Haag of the Central Nevada Museum and Suzy McCoy served as consultants throughout the project; their participation was essential. Much-deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

All material for the NCTHP was prepared with the support of the Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Office, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect the views of Nye County or the U.S. DOE.

—Robert D. McCracken
2013

INTRODUCTION

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the close of the American frontier. By then, most of the western United States had been settled, ranches and farms developed, communities established, and roads and railroads constructed. The mining boomtowns, based on the lure of overnight riches from newly discovered mineral deposits, were but a memory.

Nevada was granted statehood in 1864. But examination of any map of the state from the late 1800s shows that, although most of the state had been mapped and its geographical features named, a vast region—stretching from Belmont south to the Las Vegas meadows, comprising most of Nye County—remained largely unsettled and unmapped. In 1890, most of southcentral Nevada remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be so for at least another twenty years.

The spectacular mining booms at Tonopah (1900), Goldfield (1902), Rhyolite (1904), Manhattan (1905), and Round Mountain (1906) represent the last major flowering of what might be called the Old West in the United States. Consequently, southcentral Nevada, notably Nye County, remains close to the American frontier; closer, perhaps, than any other region of the American West. In a real sense, a significant part of the frontier can still be found in southcentral Nevada. It exists in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area also is visible in the relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past, and recognizing that few written sources on local history are available, especially after about 1920, the Nye County Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) in 1987. The NCTHP represents an effort to systematically collect and preserve information

on the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County libraries, Special Collections in the Lied Library at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique—some are large, others are small—yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. In all, more than 700 photos have been collected and carefully identified. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories.

On the basis of the oral histories as well as existing written sources, histories have been prepared for the major communities in Nye County. These histories have been published by Nye County Press, the county's publishing department. All the oral histories, as well as the community histories, are available on the Internet.

The Nye County Board of County Commissioners, while motivated by the study of history for history's sake, initiated the NCTHP in 1987 principally to collect

information on the origin, history, traditions and quality of life of Nye County communities that would be impacted should the nation's first high-level nuclear waste repository be constructed deep inside Yucca Mountain on federal land in southcentral Nye County. Understanding such impacts would aid in their mitigation. Moreover, if the repository were built, it would remain a source of public interest for a very long time and future generations would likely want to know more about the people who once resided in the area. If the site should be found unsuitable and the repository never constructed, then materials compiled by the NCTHP would nevertheless be available for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

In 2010, the Nye County Commissioners and Darrell Lacy, Director, Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Office, approved funding for collection of a round of oral histories from individuals who had played important roles in the U.S. Department of Energy's effort to assess the suitability of Yucca Mountain as a site for permanent storage of the nation's high-level nuclear waste. (The term high-level nuclear "waste" is very much a misnomer. The vast majority of the energy originally present in the nuclear fuel remains when the spent fuel—i.e., waste—is removed from the reactor. The spent fuel needs only to be reprocessed in order to make the remaining energy available for reuse. The proper term is thus not nuclear waste, but "spent nuclear fuel.")

The search for a permanent storage site for spent nuclear fuel was authorized by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act passed by Congress in 1982, as amended in 1987. Initially, several potential sites for construction of a permanent repository were considered; the 1987 legislation narrowed the suitability search to one site, Yucca Mountain.

Over the years, several thousand scientists and engineers participated in the study of Yucca Mountain's suitability for permanent storage of spent nuclear fuel, with several

billion dollars expended on the effort. In all that research, nothing was found that would disqualify Yucca Mountain as a safe permanent storage site. Then, in 2008, in a step prescribed by the 1982 and 1987 legislation and based on the research findings, the U.S. Department of Energy applied to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for authorization to begin construction and move forward with development of a permanent repository at Yucca Mountain. The NRC was then required by law to evaluate the DOE's application and vote up or down on it—build it or forget it. That was and remains the law!

Beginning in 1983, the issue of possible construction of a permanent repository at Yucca Mountain gradually became controversial among many in Nevada. A number of high-profile politicians expressed strong opposition to the idea of storing spent fuel at Yucca Mountain from the beginning, regardless of the site's technical suitability. Several increased their political power through their outspoken opposition, essentially doing everything legally possible to block the effort. Public opinion in Las Vegas about Yucca Mountain, which was rather mild and mixed in the beginning, gradually became somewhat negative over the years, especially after 1987, when Yucca Mountain was singled out as the only candidate. Yet at the same time, public opinion in rural Nevada began and remained accepting of the program, especially in counties located closer to Yucca Mountain itself.

Nevada Congressman Harry Reid rode his strong outspoken opposition to Yucca Mountain to election to three terms in the U.S. Senate. In January 2007, he was chosen Senate Majority Leader by the majority Democrats. Newly elected President Barak Obama was highly dependent on Senator Reid for passage of his own legislative agenda. In order to mollify Senator Reid, all funding for any further work on Yucca Mountain

was killed and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), under Chairman Gregory Jaczko's maneuvering, was prevented from voting up or down on the Department of Energy's application to move forward with development of the repository. Many believe that a vote by the NRC was prevented because approval by the NRC staff was likely. Thus, one man—in this case, Senator Reid—in effect played a pivotal role in overriding the legal process prescribed by law. The findings of more than two decades of carefully conducted research costing several billion dollars were casually set aside.

In the meantime, spent nuclear fuel continues to accumulate at temporary storage facilities located near nuclear reactors at more than 45 locations around the country, some near very large cities, including Chicago.

About the Yucca Mountain Interviews

Dr. Michael Voegele held numerous positions with DOE contractors in assessing Yucca Mountain's suitability for permanent storage of spent nuclear fuel from 1981 to 2009, and continued after that as a consultant to Nye County. Perhaps more than anyone, he has a comprehensive view of the more than three decades of research about the safety of Yucca Mountain. He personally knew many of the scientists and engineers involved in the effort, including what their work consisted of and how it all came together. Given such expertise, he played a key role in selecting the majority of individuals we interviewed on Yucca Mountain history. Dr. Voegele assisted in many of the interviews and was also interviewed by me at length. Together, these interviews provide a boots-on-the-ground perspective of the assessment process in evaluating Yucca Mountain's suitability as a permanent repository site. Individuals interviewed were Drs. Thomas Cotton, Russ Dyer, Ned Elkins, Don Vieth, Jean Younker, and Michael Voegele.

Two Nye County officials who played significant roles in the Yucca Mountain effort for Nye County over the years were interviewed. Steve Bradhurst was the first director of the county's nuclear waste office, serving from 1983 through 1993. He was interviewed twice, in 1991 and again in 2010. Gary Hollis served as a Nye County Commissioner from 2005 to 2012 and in effect functioned as the commission's point man on the Yucca Mountain project during his time in office. He also was employed on drilling efforts associated with the assessment at Yucca Mountain prior to being elected a commissioner.

As noted, the idea of permanently storing spent nuclear fuel at Yucca Mountain became a heated political topic in Nevada beginning in 1983. To be fair and to give as broad a perspective as possible, we also conducted oral histories with politically focused individuals who represented differing viewpoints on Yucca Mountain. Former Nevada U.S. Senator Chic Hecht was a strong supporter of Yucca Mountain from the outset; he was interviewed in 2004. Former Nevada Governor, subsequently U.S. Senator, Richard Bryan, a strong and vigorous opponent of Yucca Mountain from the beginning, was also interviewed. At the conclusion of that interview in 2011, although by then I was a strong proponent of Yucca Mountain, Senator Bryan told me I "had been very fair." As a professional anthropologist, I take a lot of pride in his compliment. Bob Loux from almost the outset of the Yucca Mountain effort in 1983 functioned as the state of Nevada's anti-Yucca Mountain point man in his position as director of the state of Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects. His job, as he acknowledged in his oral history, was to do anything legally possible to prevent a Yucca Mountain repository from ever becoming a reality. As with Senator Bryan, the interview with Mr. Loux went well.

Unfortunately, U.S. Senator Harry Reid, despite repeated requests, did not make himself available for an interview.

Three additional interviews were conducted outside this Yucca Mountain interviewing effort, though still using Yucca Mountain funds. These individuals played important roles in the Yucca Mountain assessment effort. Troy Wade previously worked for the Department of Energy – was Assistant Secretary of Energy for Defense Programs in 1987 – 1988. He was interviewed as part of the NCTHP. Carl Gertz was Yucca Mountain Director from 1987 to 1993 and earlier worked for the DOE at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory. Ed Mueller worked for a U.S. Department of Energy contractor as a liaison between the Yucca Mountain project office and counties impacted by Yucca Mountain located in Nevada and California. Both Mr. Gertz and Mr. Mueller were interviewed under the Esmeralda County History Project.

Together, these interviews comprise a body of valuable information obtained from individuals representing a variety of perspectives on this important effort in our nation's energy history. A credible history of Yucca Mountain cannot be written without incorporation of such variable knowledge and perspectives. If development of a permanent repository at Yucca Mountain moves forward, such information on how the site was evaluated and on the enormous amount of work involved in demonstrating its suitability will prove invaluable once construction begins. The same applies for selection of a second or third repository site, and for the efforts of other nations to construct repositories as well. If the Yucca Mountain effort never moves forward, these interviews still will be helpful in understanding the great effort that went into the evaluation of Yucca Mountain as a site for permanent storage of spent nuclear fuel. It unfortunately

also tells how a good part of the more than \$11 billion spent in evaluation was in large measure wasted, not for technical faults, but for political expediency.

Opinions expressed in this introduction and in the oral history interviews do not necessarily reflect the views of Nye or Esmeralda County officials.

These interviews have been organized into four volumes and published by Nye County Press, publishing imprint owned by Nye County, Nevada. A master index covering all four volumes is included.

—RDM
2013

INTRODUCTION BY MICHAEL VOEGELE

This series of interviews with Dr. Robert McCracken, undertaken as a part of the Nye County Town History Project, focused on the Yucca Mountain project. The Yucca Mountain project oral histories were developed as part of Nye County's efforts to record information related to the project as an ancillary part of the Yucca Mountain history exhibits in the Pahrump Valley Museum. The Nye County Commissioners believed that it was important to capture this historical information, as the Department of Energy had made every effort to disassemble the project and its records when the Obama Administration made the decision that the project was unworkable, and created the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future to undertake a comprehensive review of policies for managing the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle, including all alternatives for the storage, processing, and disposal of civilian and defense used nuclear fuel and nuclear waste.

I worked with Dr. McCracken on the selection of the interviewees, and on several occasions participated as an interviewer. We consciously tried to identify interviewees who had been involved at the heart of the technical story of Yucca Mountain. Because funds were not unlimited, we needed to select carefully a relatively small number of interviewees. There were potential interviewees that we were not able to talk to because they had moved on to other venues following the Department of Energy's termination efforts and we simply were not able to accommodate schedule problems. We also tried to ensure a balance of perspectives on the project. Readers will find that the interviews tend to focus on a portion of the project's history or a major technical element of the project. In recognition of this, we decided that there ought to be an interview that attempted to

encompass as much of the project's history as possible, bearing in mind that the relevant history covers nearly 70 years.

The interview Dr. McCracken conducted with me is that document. While my tenure on the program was longer than most, I certainly do not have firsthand knowledge of the earlier parts of the program. I have, however, long studied the origins and early history of the project. My time on the high-level waste disposal program dates from the mid-1970s to the present, and I did not necessarily have significant involvement in everything talked about in that document. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Donald Vieth for the many discussions we had on the earlier parts of the program and found it fascinating how together we helped each other remember so much of the program's early history.

I felt it was important to offer the caveat that it would not surprise me to find that a reader remembered things differently than I did, or believed that I was mistaken in my recollections. I accept responsibility for any such errors; I can only say it has been a long time. It is also important to acknowledge the time so graciously accorded us by the interviewees. I suspect that some of them wish, as I do, that there had been references available to check some of our memories. I can only say thank you for trying to help us collect some important information.

I'd like to particularly thank Nye County Commissioners Gary Hollis and Joni Eastley for their enthusiastic and unwavering support for the interview project and the museum displays, and Dr. McCracken for his skill as an interviewer.

Michael D. Voegele
2013

Interview by Robert McCracken, talking to Steve Bradhurst at his home in Reno, Nevada, May 25, June 4, and August 25, 2010.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Steve, please tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate and when and where you were born.

SB: I am Stephen Thomas Bradhurst Jr., and I was born in Washington, D.C., July 12, 1943.

RM: What is your father's name?

SB: Stephen Thomas Bradhurst Sr.

RM: And when and where was he born?

SB: He was born in 1914 in Paterson, New Jersey.

RM: Please give an overview of his life. For example, how did he earn a living?

SB: My dad was an electrician, a cable splicer, with the Potomac Electric Power Company in Washington, D.C. He and also drove a cab part-time. Back in those days he had two jobs to support his family.

RM: He probably picked up some interesting passengers over the years.

SB: Yes. In fact, at times he would even take me along in his cab. My mom died when I was two-and-a-half, and after her death my dad probably took me with him in his cab on occasion so we could visit.

RM: Any interesting experiences that you recall?

SB: Well, I was so young, probably between six and nine, and I remember I had a hard time staying awake because we drove at night. Looking back, I do not know how my dad was able to work during the day for the power company and then drive cab at night. He must have been exhausted. It was tough on him losing his wife and raising two

children. My sister, Peggy, was four-and-a-half when my mother died. My mother died of an infection. Nowadays you could easily take care of the infection with penicillin, but it was an infection of the heart, and she passed away in 1946. I have a good friend that had the same infection of the lining of the heart in the late 1980s. He was able to get a shot, and he recovered quickly.

Regarding unusual experiences while accompanying my dad in his cab, I guess all I can say is I looked forward to our late night dinner breaks at a restaurant. I think that's where I acquired my taste for jelly eggs, scrambled eggs with jelly. I tried to get my daughters to eat a jelly egg, but I met with little success. My favorite jelly egg is an egg omelet with grape jelly in the middle, you flip the omelet over and the jelly heats up and it bleeds through the omelet—it looks terrible.

RM: [Laughs] What part of D.C. did you live in? What was it like there at that time?

SB: For the most part, I grew up in southeast Washington, D.C. Before my mom died in 1946, we lived in a house in northwest Washington, D.C. When my mom died, first we stayed with my dad's aunt in Maryland near Washington, D.C., for about four years, and later we stayed with my dad's sister in Alexandria, Virginia, just across the Potomac River from Washington. We lived in Alexandria, for a little over a year. Then we moved to an apartment complex in southeast Washington, D.C., before my dad married my stepmom. My stepmom, Sue, was a really nice person. My dad and she were married in 1953, and suddenly Sue had the unenviable task of raising me (10 years old) and my sister (12 years old), along with her son, Jim (14 years old). We continued to live in the apartment complex until 1963. Then my dad and stepmom purchased a home in Fort Washington, Maryland, near Washington, D.C.

RM: What was your mom's maiden name and date of birth?

SB: My mom's maiden name was Amy Metz, and she was born April 21, 1916.

RM: And do you know where?

SB: She was born in Washington, D.C. My mom and her sister were very close, and her sister died about a year before my mom died. When her sister died she left two children, a daughter and a son. And my mom's sister's husband was so overcome, I guess, by grief or whatever that he couldn't handle it. So the daughter of my mom's sister, my cousin Jean, lived with us. She was about 12 at the time. All the things that Jean went through were tough, but she was at least living with my mom, who was just like her mother. My mom loved Jean. Jean said she thought she was in heaven because she had such a good home with my mom and my dad. And within a short period of time my mom died, and Jean was off living with another family member. That poor girl experienced two tragedies in a little over two years.

RM: What did the sister die of?

SB: She died of a blood transfusion; they gave her the wrong kind of blood. My grandmother—I called her Nanny—had two daughters, and she lost both of them in two years. And both of them had two children. And both mothers died of things that you wouldn't die of today.

RM: What can you tell me about the rest of your immediate family?

SB: As stated, I have a sister, and her name is Peggy Thume. My stepbrother's name is Jim Smith. I am the lucky guy who married Margaret Tayloe Sothoron on July 12, 1967. To me and most people, my wife's name is Beezie. She is a twin, and when she and her twin sister were born they did not have a name, and the nurses in the nursery at the hospital called the first baby Aeezie and the second baby born was called Beezie. Beezie and I have two terrific daughters, Megan, born June 16, 1975, and Amanda, born June 15,

1977. Megan married Dave Solaro January 10, 1998, and they have two daughters, Jessica and Emma. Jessica was born July 19, 2002, and Emma was born July 19, 2005. I am extremely proud of my daughters, my son-in-law and my granddaughters. And, as people who know Beezie will tell you, I am blessed to have her in my life.

RM: Where did you go to school?

SB: I went to school primarily in Washington, D.C., from elementary school to Anacostia High School. That was in 1959, and we were in a mixed-race community. Integration was relatively new to the Washington, D.C., school system. Anacostia High School was integrated, and my high school graduating class, the class of 1961, was 50 percent white and 50 percent black. The students got along fairly well. We had great teachers, and I am grateful for having attended the school. I participated in sports in high school—on the basketball team and on the track team. I had good friends who were black. I believe the melting pot environment made a positive impression on me for the rest of my life. I like to think I don't have a prejudiced view against other races, and I think that is because of my time at Anacostia High School. I am proud of that fact, and that my children treat people as equals.

RM: Where did you go college?

SB: When I graduated from high school a coach who saw me play basketball said, "Would you like to play basketball in college—junior college—in Southern California?" And I figured, well, what the heck. I had never been on an airplane, never really left Washington, D.C. So I went to Citrus College in Glendora, California, from 1961 through 1963. I played basketball for the college.

During my time at Citrus College, I worked at a military academy for boys for my room and board. The school was called Brown Military Academy. It appeared to me the

school was for rich boys ages ten to 18. Michael Landon and other movie stars in the area sent their kids to that school. They had to wear uniforms that looked like West Point uniforms. My job on weekends would be to take care of the students that did not go home. So I would be there in charge of the place with other college students and a person retired from the military. I lived in the dorms with the kids. It worked out quite well, I had a place to stay while attending Citrus College, and I have to say the food was excellent.

RM: And you lived full time in the dorms?

SB: Right, yes. When I left Citrus College I had an opportunity to play basketball at American University in Washington, D.C., but by that time my knees were acting up. So I went to George Washington University, in Washington, D.C. A friend of my father's, Dr. John Renny, was a professor at George Washington, and he took me under his wing. He encouraged me to attend George Washington; I'll never forget Dr. Renny going the extra mile to make sure I continued my education. He was such a nice guy. He said, "I'm going to help you get into GW." He pointed me in the right direction, and it was up to me to make it, and fortunately I did, even though the school was expensive. So I started at George Washington University in the fall of '63, and I graduated in '66.

I rowed for the GW crew team; I had to do something that involved athletics. So crew was it—I could do that and not mess up my knees or whatever. I enjoyed my time at George Washington.

RM: Were you on scholarship or anything? You said it was expensive. How did you afford it?

SB: I worked at a number of part-time jobs while I was at GW. I worked for *U.S. News and World Report*. In fact, the first day that I went to work for *U.S. News and*

World Report was the day that John F. Kennedy was killed. I walked into the mail room where I was working, and everybody was quiet and they were listening to the radio. They said, “Steve, the president’s been shot and we want you to jump into one of our vehicles and go to the White House and to Capitol Hill and get pictures that are coming across the wire and bring them back to us.” I remember driving down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House and going into the White House news section. There were no people on the streets, and it was the most eerie thing, because all I could hear were the birds and you never hear birds in Washington, D.C., because of the noise of the street traffic. There was nobody on the streets. Everybody was inside listening to the radio or watching TV, except for me in the *U.S. News and World Report* vehicle going to the White House to get the pictures associated with the assassination.

RM: The pictures were coming into the White House? They didn’t have their own link at *U.S. News*?

SB: At that time they didn’t. So it was my job to go to the White House news section and pick up the pictures and take them back to the *U.S. News and World Report* headquarters.

RM: So you saw them before anybody.

SB: Well, they were in a sealed envelope. Then I had to go to Capitol Hill and pick up some other stuff and then get back to 23rd and M, where *U.S. News and World Report* headquarters was located—not too far from George Washington University and the White House.

I also drove, like my father, a taxi cab while at George Washington University because as mentioned, the school was expensive. I drove for the airport cab company at National Airport—it’s now Reagan National Airport—whenever I could. I’d just go over

to the lot at night, pick up a cab, pick people up at the airport, drive them into town, and drop them off. I'd make a few extra bucks. Then I'd take the cab back and get in my car and go home. So I had two jobs at one time when I attended George Washington University. Also, during the time I attended George Washington University, I worked in the summer for the U.S. Post Office and I worked in the summer for High's Dairy. Those jobs required me to drive 5-ton trucks; in one job the truck was filled with mail, and with the other job the truck was filled with ice cream.

RM: What did you major in, in college?

SB: Political science was of great interest to me, but I focused on a budding land-use planning program—a geography and planning program. My major was in geography and planning, and my minor was in math. I had terrific instructors. I remember I had one instructor, Dr. Samuel Van Valkenberg, who was from Clark University. He was a superb instructor. He had been a dean of the Clark University geography department. He was a Dutchman who had traveled all over the world. He was 75 years old and he knew world climates inside and out, and he taught a year-long world climatology class at George Washington University. I was fortunate to have been one of his students.

RM: What brought you out West?

SB: When I graduated from college I taught high school for a year. I didn't know what I wanted to do. It was 1966. Upon graduation from GW I was eligible for the military draft. Like a lot of people, I guess I should have been drafted. In fact, I went through the physical at Fort Holabird Army Base in Maryland, outside of Baltimore. After taking the physical and the written exam, I and other college graduates were told, "You guys are going to be drafted right away. Why don't you sign up and be officers in the army?"

As it turns out, because of my poor eyesight and other physical ailments the

military later gave me a 4F classification, which meant I was not eligible for the draft. From 1966 to 1969, I taught high school in Fairfax County Virginia—I taught math and geography and also coached basketball. I might add a very important thing happened in my life on July 12, 1967—I married Beezie.

In 1969, I decided I wanted to get a master's degree. I was really interested in geophysics, oceanography, and seismology. Beezie and I identified five schools that I wanted to check on to see if I could get a scholarship. Beezie was a nurse. We sold our house in Fairfax County, took all of our furniture and stored it, bought a half-ton 1969 Chevy pickup, put a shell top on it, threw a lot of our stuff in the back, and then took off west. We visited the University of Missouri at Rolla, and I interviewed in their geophysics department to see if I could get a scholarship. Beezie checked with the hospital there to see if she could get a job. We were going to visit the five schools and make a decision when we got to the end of the line, which was Oregon State.

Then we went to the University of Tulsa. I went in and interviewed there, and Beezie looked at the hospitals in Tulsa. We went to Socorro, New Mexico, and the New Mexico Institute of Mining, and did the same thing there—that's a hardscrabble place. Then we went to the University of Nevada in Reno. I interviewed with the seismology department, and I liked the program and the people. The department head said, "You've got a good background in math, we have a scholarship we can give you in seismology." Beezie visited the VA hospital in Reno, and they were going to pay her \$5,000 more than she made as a nurse back in Virginia. The last school to visit was Oregon State, and we didn't even go there. We just stopped our search in Reno in early December of 1969.

RM: Wow, what a story. I mean, how many people are that thorough in selecting their grad school? [Laughs]

SB: Yes, we were thorough. I just was lucky that I had a wife who could support us while I worked on my master's degree.

RM: Right. So then what happened?

SB: Then in early 1972, I earned a Master of Science degree in geology at the Mackey School of Mines, University of Nevada, Reno. I actually triple-majored in geology, seismology, and geography, but the diploma reads a Master's of Science Degree in Geology. I took a lot of coursework in seismology and in geography.

In early 1972, I had a job offer in Washington, D.C., working for the Census Bureau, of all places. But at the same time there was a job announcement here in the paper, in Reno. The Regional Planning Commissioner of Reno, Sparks and Washoe County needed a planner to develop a natural resource plan, a component of the area's master plan.

I just dropped off my application and then took off back East on an airplane to be interviewed for the U.S. Census Bureau position. I'll never forget, Bob—I got off the plane; it was February of 1972; I think it was at Dulles International Airport. It was a typical winter Washington, D.C. day—cold and damp, maybe 32 degrees and 80 percent relative humidity, and it went right through you. Before I even went to the interview, I called Beezie and said, “We're not doing this.”

It gets cold in Reno, but it's a dry cold. Reno's climate was paradise to me, and here I was back in Washington, D.C. The weather was terrible, it was winter, and there was all this traffic, and I said, “We're not doing this.” Then, as it turns out, within a week I got a call from the regional planning commission. They wanted me to come in for an interview. They had three professional planners at that time, and two of them graduated from George Washington University. So right away, when they saw my application and

they knew that I had gone through the same planning program at George Washington University as an undergraduate, that gave me a leg up.

RM: Because they knew you would be on the same page with them.

SB: Yes. Some of the same professors. These guys were just really nice. In fact, Don Bayer is the guy that I worked for in the advanced planning section. Don just passed away last week; he was a super guy. He died of Lou Gehrig's disease. He just taught me so much about how to be a good human being, and he also taught me the planning profession. I was with the Regional Planning Commission of Reno, Sparks and Washoe County from 1973 till 1978.

I was involved with some really neat programs at the Regional Planning Commission, including a unique planning program that was an exhibit at a United Nations Man and the Biosphere meeting at Lake Tahoe. That planning program involved computerizing natural resource and natural hazard information and overlaying the natural resource and natural hazard information to determine areas suitable for human habitation. The UN folks thought it was unique and forward thinking, and they asked the Regional Planning Commission to display the program at the Biosphere Conference at Lake Tahoe.

I left the Regional Planning Commission for about a year from 1978 to 1979 to pursue consulting work in the Ozarks. I was in Fayetteville, Arkansas, as a consultant helping the private sector locate sites for what would be stores similar to a 7-11 convenience store. My work required I visit potential sites in a four-state area (Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma). In early 1979, I heard about a planning position with Clark County, Nevada. I was interviewed by the Clark County planning director, and he wanted me to be his assistant director of planning. As it turns out, the planning director, Pat Shalmy, graduated from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. When I applied

he said, “Steve, you’re where I went to school.” So I interviewed with Pat Shalmy, who later became Clark County manager.

Pat offered me the planning job, but in the process of checking my background he asked the people at the regional planning commission in Washoe County about me, and they therefore found out that I was available. They called me and said, “We’d like you to come back to the Regional Planning Commission of Reno, Sparks and Washoe County and be assistant director because we have a vacancy.” I took the job in Reno and thanked Pat for the offer to be the assistant director of planning in Clark County. That would have been in the spring of 1979—I was in Arkansas from ’78 to ’79. So in ’79, I came back to Reno, and for a year I was the assistant director of the regional planning commission in Washoe County, in charge of all current planning (i.e., subdivisions, zoning, etc.).

But I still had a desire to do something different. In late 1979, it appeared the U.S. Air Force MX Missile Project was coming to Nevada and Utah. The state of Nevada created an MX Missile Project Office in late 1979 to assess the impacts of the proposed project on Nevada. The project would have deployed missiles in seven Nevada counties. These counties came together and created the Nevada MX Local Oversight Committee in early 1980. The seven counties were Clark County, Lincoln County, White Pine County, Eureka County, Lander County, Nye County, and Esmeralda County. The Nevada MX Local Oversight Committee’s goal was to protect the local counties from the possible impacts of the proposed project. So, in early 1980, the Nevada Local Oversight Committee interviewed people to serve as the committee’s staff director. I interviewed for the job, and I was a finalist. It turns out the interview committee included Pat Shalmy, the guy that asked me to be his assistant director at the Clark County Planning Department. The interview committee selected me to be the first director of the Nevada

MX Local Oversight Committee. The committee office was to be in downtown Pioche.

Clark County and White Pine County were fighting over a number of issues; they couldn't get along, and it got pretty nasty. So sitting here in Reno, I thought do I want to get in the middle of that? It came down to a bad relationship between a couple of the board members from Clark County and a couple of the board members from White Pine County. I was offered the job, and I declined. And then, probably within four months, the director of the state MX office, Connie Ashcraft, resigned.

Governor Robert List at that time had created an MX management committee. Serving on the committee were five people in his administration, including Bob Hill, the State Planning Coordinator; Jim Wadhams, the Director of the Commerce Department; and Roland Westergard, the Director of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Those three, the Governor, and the person who directed the Nevada MX Missile Oversight Office comprised the Governor's MX Management Committee. I understand members of the Governor's MX Management Committee asked Pat Shalmy for his recommendations, and he said, "You guys ought to talk to Steve about taking on the state job. He rejected our offer for the local job because he didn't want to get in the middle of the Clark County/White Pine County problem."

So I got a call from Roland Westergard, who was a friend of mine, and he said, "Come on down to Carson City for an interview with three members of the Governor's MX Management Committee." I went to Carson City on a Friday and was interviewed by Roland, Jim Wadhams, and Bob Hill. They said, "We're going to recommend you to the governor. You need to come back here to Carson City, tomorrow, Saturday morning, at 10:00 a.m. to be interviewed by Governor Bob List for the MX job." So I did that.

I did not know Governor List. I walked into his office, and it was just the two of

us. We sat and talked, and he said, “I want you, Steve. I’ll tell you what, I want to hire you right now. I want you to go with me to Ely today. The state plane is at the Carson City airport. Jump in the plane with me, because the state press is having their annual conference this year in Ely at the Bristlecone Convention Center, and I want to introduce you to the state press as my director.”

I had told Beezie before I left for the interview with the governor that, “I’ll be home by noon.” I didn’t have a chance to talk to her after the interview with the governor. Bob List took me out the back door of the state capitol building. We jumped in his car—it was a big black Mercury I think—and I was in the front seat with him, and we drove over to the airport, jumped in the state plane, and we were on our way to Ely. There were two planes; one of them carried the governor’s wife, Kathy List, and a few female reporters, and the other plane carried the governor, me, Roland Westergard, Jim Wadhams, and, I think, Bob Hill.

I remember we went to land in Ely in a snowstorm. I could hear the pilots say, “Let’s see if the girls can make it first in their plane. Try to get their plane in, in the snowstorm.” The first plane said, “No, we can’t make it.” At that time I thought, “I am in the right place. As long as I am with the governor I’m safe.”

RM: They are going to take care of him. [Laughs]

SB: Yes, let the women go first. And the governor always had two pilots with him. We ended up in Elko where we could land the planes, and we drove down Highway 93 about 90 miles an hour to Ely. Then the governor took me around at the conference and introduced me to press people. It was just nonstop, and I didn’t get back to the airport in Carson City until later that evening. That’s when I finally was able to call my wife and let her know what was going on.

And I was in the fast lane from that point, March 1980, until the MX Missile Project was cancelled for Nevada and Utah in October 1981. At the beginning, I was the director of the Nevada MX Missile Project Office, and I was working directly for the governor as a consultant, and I inherited a team of consultants who worked in the office. Then in the 1981 Nevada Legislative Session the Legislature created a state agency with cabinet-level status. The agency was called the Nevada MX Missile Project Department. So 1980 and 1981 was an exciting and professionally rewarding time for me. I spent a lot of time at meetings in the Washington, D.C. area, particularly in the Pentagon.

RM: In the Pentagon?

SB: Yes, because the MX Missile Project was an Air Force project. I was also on Capitol Hill a lot, too. I worked closely with Senator Paul Laxalt and his staff, and with Congressman Jim Santini and his staff. I got to know those folks really well.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: Do you want to talk about the MX project?

SB: For me, a guy who had been the assistant director of the planning commission for Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County one day and the next day was suddenly the director of a state agency responsible for protecting the state from a potentially damaging federal project was a tremendous honor and challenge. I needed all the help I could get, and I was blessed with an exceptional staff, and many state of Nevada workers in other agencies provided my office critical support.

What the governor did—and I applaud Bob List for this—is he had a cabinet meeting when I first took the state MX office job, and he told the members of his cabinet, maybe 30 people, “I want you all to know that Steve is running the state MX program, and essentially you work for him. Whatever he wants, you give it to him—whether you are the director of the state transportation department or the director of the state department of conservation and natural resources or state department of commerce or wildlife department. If Steve needs something, you give it to him, because addressing this project is really critical to the people of Nevada.”

RM: So he was that committed to doing a good job on it.

SB: Yes. The thing about Bob List that I like is that he was always, it seemed like, smarter than everybody else around him. I mean, he could really pick up things quickly. As soon as I took the job, there was a Western Governors’ Association meeting at Lake Tahoe, and I knew nothing, really, about the Air Force MX Project. I was supposed to write his speech at the governors’ meeting on the potential impacts of the MX missile project on Nevada. I remember thinking, “Oooh.” I had very few people on my staff, and

most of them were out of the office. I had to sit down and write this speech for Bob. I had no idea what he knew and what he didn't know and how he likes to speak, and I wrote the speech for him. It was an all-nighter, and I put it together and ran it up to Kings Castle Hotel & Casino at Incline Village, the location of the Western Governors' conference. Kings Castle Hotel & Casino is now the Hyatt Regency. I was able to get the speech to Governor List just before he was to give it.

He was sitting at the table getting ready to get up to give the speech. He got it, and he read it, and he got up and gave the speech. I was never so proud in my life. I was sitting there thinking, "Those are my words."

RM: How did you do it? I mean, we didn't have the Internet.

SB: I know. I just looked at what we had in the MX office. I remember I wrote the speech on the cumulative impacts of the MX missile project, looking at the socioeconomic impacts and the natural resource impacts. We had a lot of documents in the MX office so I had to be a quick study.

There were two states involved in MX. One was Utah and the other was Nevada. About 35 percent of the project was going to be deployed in Utah, and 65 percent of the project would be deployed in Nevada. There were going to be 4,600 shelters and 200 missiles. Each MX missile would have ten warheads. There'd be 23 shelters in a cluster, and one of the shelters would have the live missile, and the other 22 shelters would have dummy missiles. The concept was to have these things spread out throughout central and eastern Nevada and western Utah and make the Russians target all 4,600 shelters. Therefore, that area would be the national sacrifice area for the whole country. It was Nevada and Utah's job to essentially absorb the Russian nuclear arsenal. In a time of war, in a nuclear exchange, the Russians would have to send most of their nuclear missiles to

Nevada and Utah.

RM: Because they wouldn't know which shelter a given missile was in.

SB: Yes, so they'd have to get to all of them. And when you think about it, that was not a bright prospect for folks living in Nevada and Utah. [Laughs]

RM: That's right, a few A-bombs coming down on them.

SB: Forty-six hundred A-bombs. Utah had a state MX program. There was a fellow named Ken Olson who was already in place and running the State of Utah MX Missile Project Office. Ken was a highly intelligent and effective person. I learned a lot from Ken and his boss, Utah Governor Scott Matheson.

RM: But was the state anti-MX from the beginning, or was it open-minded?

SB: I think it was open-minded. From what I saw down south, the powers that be in Clark County seemed to be neutral-to-supportive of the MX missile project. The air force worked them over pretty good. I remember Antonia Chayes—she was a secretary of the air force—was down in the halls of the city council of Las Vegas and the county commission office sort of spreading the good word on why the state of Nevada should accept the MX missile project. There were politicians in Clark County that thought the project was a good idea, and that it was Nevada's responsibility to step up to the plate and accept this project without hesitation. In fact, former Nevada Governor Mike O'Callahan wrote in his "Where I Stand" opinion column in the *Las Vegas Sun* that the MX missile project was critical to the defense of the country, and Nevadans should support its deployment in Nevada.

RM: He did? He was pro MX?

SB: Yes. In fact, Mike O'Callahan came after me on a couple of occasions in his opinion column because he thought I wasn't being neutral in my position. I was trying to

be neutral. Bob List said, “Steve, I expect Roland Westergard to be concerned about the environment because he is the director of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. I expect Jim Wadhams to be concerned about the economy, and maybe he would be supportive of it, because he is the director of the State Department of Commerce. But you’re my technical guy; you have to be right down the middle, and I want you to be neutral on it.” And that’s what I tried to be all along. But as more and more information came out, it was obvious that, on the socioeconomic side, the deployment of the MX missile project in Nevada was not going to be good for Nevada.

RM: It wasn’t?

SB: No; the negative impacts were going to be significant to Nevada. You were going to have man camps with thousands and thousands of people going from one rural community to another rural community, just destroying them. And there would be adverse impacts on the wildlife and other Nevada resources, including cultural, natural, and economic resources.

And in addition to that, the Air Force planned to close off a very large area for national security purposes. First they said, “We are just going to close off the areas around each one of these 4,600 shelters, 2.5 acres per shelter.” But we got word from reliable sources that the plan was to close off the whole area. That meant 35 percent of Nevada’s land area would have been closed off. It would have been a good portion of White Pine County, a good portion of Lincoln County, a good portion of Nye County, the southern part of Eureka, the southern part of Lander County, sort of the northern part of Esmeralda County—all of that was going to be closed off to civilians. The air force didn’t want people standing on the hills looking at these missiles as they were being transported by big transporters from one shelter to another. They said they thought maybe Russian

spies could detect whether the transporter had a live missile in it or a dummy missile. So they were just going to close the whole area off to civilians. That would have been devastating to Nevada, particularly to the rural communities for mining, ranching, farming, and recreation.

The air force said the environmental impact statement on the MX missile project would address all of our concerns, and it really didn't. The state of Nevada, through my office, created a comprehensive and unprecedented process to review the EIS. We had 90 days to review that massive EIS and submit our comments. We asked for volunteers to serve on 31 committees to look at certain topics in the EIS, and 400 Nevadans volunteered to serve on the 31 committees. My staff coordinated the work of the 31, collected the reviewers' comments, and prepared a Nevada response document on the EIS. The response document was almost as big as the EIS.

RM: Did the air force EIS come out as you came on the job?

SB: No, I came to the job in March of 1980. The statement didn't come out until early summer 1981. I have to say the EIS review process developed by the state of Nevada was amazing. I mentioned that 400 Nevadans volunteered to serve on 31 review committees. We had academics, businesspeople, government employees, lawyers, environmentalists, miners, farmers, ranchers, and Native Americans. A number of the committee members lived in rural Nevada, and it was not easy for them to attend committee meetings in Carson City. We had many committee meetings to prepare the reviewers for the 90-day review period. I remember going in front of each committee and telling the committee members how much the state of Nevada appreciated their help in reviewing the EIS. I'd have my staff members work with the committees on a regular basis in order to get them ready to review the EIS in a 90-day period.

I remember the first time I saw Dick Carver of Nye County sitting out there in a committee meeting with his cowboy hat. Dick was concerned about the future of the state, and he volunteered to help the state review the EIS. Dr. Jim Hulse, a noted Nevada historian, called the coming together of Nevadans from rural and urban Nevada, from traditional opposing positions on many issues, and from different cultures, to address the MX missile project the “Sagebrush Alliance.” As stated, we had environmentalists, we had ranchers, we had farmers, we had people from the urban area, we had Native Americans, and we had academics all working together on the EIS review committees. We had people that would normally not talk to each other all working together for the good of the state of Nevada.

RM: And again, they were doing an open-minded evaluation, right? They weren’t trying to kill it from the beginning.

SB: Right. And then they had the EIS and its appendices they had to read. The draft environmental impact statement and its appendices were delivered to my office in two trucks. We needed a copy of the draft document and its appendices for each one of our 400 review committee members. The review committees had guidelines, and they had schedules to meet. I’m just so proud of the way my staff and the reviewers rolled up their sleeves and produced a comprehensive EIS response document. I had a staff of about seven people. I had an economist, I had a civil engineer, and I had a social services–type person. So I had four technical people, including me, in the office, and I had three support staff. My staff did an exceptional job in coordinating the state response to the Air Force MX Missile Project EIS. As I said, our response document was almost as big as the EIS.

RM: It was that big?

SB: The reviewers had so many comments, and we had a person go through the

review comments to make sure the response document read well. We had a legal sufficiency review team on board to make sure everything was legal. We followed the NEPA and CEQ guidelines and so forth. And then we sent our draft response document over to Governor List, who had strep throat at that time. For a week he was out of commission. He was in the mansion recuperating, and he couldn't do much but be in the mansion. He took the time to read the Nevada draft response document. He would call me throughout the week and I could determine from his questions that he was reading the response document. Bless his heart, the guy was actually going through the response document. He would say, "Steve, I thought the air force was going to respond to these concerns in the EIS, and they did not." I could tell during that week Governor List was starting to get a better sense of what was really going on. There were promises made by the air force that were not kept in terms of addressing Nevada's primary concerns.

RM: What are some examples of the big issues?

SB: For example, the amount of water resources that would be used to build the facilities in these various valleys. I am sure, if you go back and look, our experts' response was, "These guys are way off in terms of how much water is going to be needed to implement the project." The impact on the wildlife would have been significant as a result of having 10,000 to 20,000 construction workers living in rural valleys and moving from one valley to another over the course of years.

And the socioeconomic impacts associated with the construction phase of the project were for the most part ignored. The air force said, "Well, what we'll do is we'll have man camps of 10,000 to 20,000 people, and we'll keep the people away from the towns." That meant that the man camp was in the next valley over, but that doesn't mean they weren't going to go into town. So there were issues that they were supposed to

address—welfare, the workers coming in that couldn't get jobs, and they're hanging around. Law enforcement. You name it. The issues were one after the other and they were not addressed sufficiently in the EIS.

Paul Laxalt, our senator at the time, and Jake Garn, the senator from Utah, addressed the strategic utility of deploying MX missiles in horizontal shelters on Capitol Hill. My job, and the state's job, was to look at the impact of the project, during construction and operation, on the state of Nevada—its economy, its people, its wildlife, its natural resources—whereas the military applications, the military strategic utility, was handled by Paul Laxalt. He and Jake Garn, a sharp and concerned senator, went behind closed doors and had hearings with the air force and asked the air force to justify why the MX project had to cover 35 percent of Nevada and 15 percent of Utah with 4,600 shelters. It could have grown even larger in time. The Air Force MX Missile Project was called "Man's Largest Project," and its cost in 1981 dollars was in excess of a billion dollars.

RM: Each shelter would have been a huge construction project itself, wouldn't it?

SB: Exactly, because you had to put the MX missile in it and the shelters were supposed to withstand, not a direct hit, but a hit that might have been nearby.

RM: But they couldn't stand a hit in the same valley?

SB: Not if it was close enough to destroy the MX missile transporter. The MX missile transporter had the job of pulling the live missile out of a shelter and firing the missile presumably toward Russia. The concept was you'd have maybe 12 minutes to pull the live missile out of a shelter once the Russians fired their nuclear missiles at the MX missile shelters in Nevada and Utah. The Russians would fire their missiles, and we would see the missiles flying from Russia from satellite imagery or whatever. Then the

concept was that you'd have a person in this big transporter back up right to the shelter with the live missile and pull out the live missile, if it wasn't already on the transporter. Then the live MX missile would be put in a vertical position and launched from the transporter.

None of us could ever figure out who was going to be the driver for the transporter. Because, you know, you would not be getting out of there alive. You'd know you were targeted. If you're backed up to the shelter, and you're pulling the missile out, and the clock's running, and you only have 12 minutes, and then someone makes it go vertical, and then they deploy it—you can't get away fast enough.

RM: So they wanted to get the missile out of there before an all-out attack.

SB: Right. But still, all the other missiles would be coming down. Each missile might have ten warheads so the missile would come down and then the ten warheads would split off and be targeted to various MX shelters. Then supposedly our missile would be passing the Russian missile going over to Russia.

RM: It was actually a bizarre idea, wasn't it?

SB: Oh, yes. The political cartoons associated with the MX missile project were hilarious, particularly the political cartoons in the *Deseret News* in Utah.

As stated, Senator Paul Laxalt and Senator Jake Garn asked the air force to justify the MX missile project in terms of strategic utility. Senator Laxalt told me the Air Force could not justify the MX deployment mode. I think it was July 31 that Bob Warren, who was the Executive Director of the Nevada Mining Association, and I went to Washington, D.C., to talk to Paul Laxalt about information that we had on the impact of the MX project on the mining industry, particularly in light of the news that a good portion of Nevada would be closed off. I'll never forget it—I walked into Senator Laxalt's office in

the Russell Office Building, a really nice office with a fireplace and great view of the Capitol building. In the office there was a birthday cake on the table—I think they were celebrating Senator Laxalt's birthday. We walked into the senator's private office. He was always just so nice to me, and polite. The door was open in his office, and we walked in, and we started to talk to him about the impact of the MX project on Nevada's mining industry, and he said, "Just a minute, fellows."

He got up, walked over and shut the door, came back and sat down, and said, "The president, as you know, is in the Western White House, at his ranch in the Santa Barbara area, and he'll be there for a month or so. But when he gets back, he's going to make an announcement that the MX missile project is not coming to Nevada." And I thought, "Wow." But he said, "You can't tell anybody, but that's the way it is going to be. It is going to be deployed in silos that are already in place in Nebraska and Montana. The Air Force will have to take the old missiles in the silos out and replace them with the new MX missiles, missiles with ten nuclear warheads."

So Bob Warren and I looked at each other and said, "How do we keep this a secret?" The president didn't make the announcement until October 2nd.

RM: Yes, I remember when he made it.

SB: In fact, a *Christian Science Monitor* reporter who covered the MX project was in my office October 2, 1981. He knew President Reagan was going to make an announcement on the MX missile project, but he did not know what the president was going to say. The reporter wanted to get my reaction to the president's announcement. I did not tell a person in my office about the information I received from Senator Laxalt in late July. A couple of days before the announcement, I was in Austin, Nevada, for a meeting and Leslie Stahl with *CBS News* tracked me down. She said that she had heard

that the decision was going to be made that the MX was not going to be coming to Nevada and that the president was going to make the announcement October 2nd. She is really sharp. She asked me the question about six different times and six different ways. I could not tell her what Senator Laxalt told me.

RM: Was this in person?

SB: No, on the phone. She is with *60 Minutes* now.

RM: Yes, I'm an admirer of hers.

SB: She kept probing and I was pushing back, saying, "I don't know, I can't tell you anything." I made this commitment to Paul Laxalt that I wasn't going to tell anybody so I just said, "I don't know. You'll have to wait till the president makes the announcement."

RM: I had come to Nevada then. I had been talking to the corps of engineers, and they told me they were going to give me a contract on MX when they started on it. So when he made the announcement, I thought, "Oh God, there goes that opportunity." [Laughs]

SB: The air force had, with my permission, located a major to my office. Also, the air force assigned a brigadier general who was supposed to be, like, their PR or glad-hand guy in Nevada. None of those guys knew anything about the president's decision on MX. So when the announcement was made, it really irritated them because they had no idea what was happening. I guess Cap Weinberger, the secretary of defense, didn't let anybody know it was coming. So they were in utter shock. The air force major who was located in my office wouldn't talk to me; he and his superiors were really upset. They just thought it was terrible that the MX missile project would not be deployed in Nevada. They thought the MX missile project would give the air force another wing, and the new wing would require more generals, and it would be responsible for the MX missile project. Senator Laxalt told me it seemed as though the Air Force was pushing the MX

missile project in Nevada in order to have another wing, instead of because it made strategic sense.

The only thing I felt bad about was my staff, because we were going to close down the Nevada MX missile project office as quickly as possible, and all of us would be gone. Bob List, to his credit, said, “Steve, do you want to work in my administration?”

I said, “No, I am going out to the private sector, but I want to find jobs, if I can, for the people on my staff in state government.” And we did. We found a place for each one of them in state government, except for one staffer who decided to return to his home in Seattle. They were really good people, and they worked long hours on behalf of the people in this state.

Don’t let me forget to tell you about the air force three-star general who went to Governor List in January, 1981, to have me fired.

RM: Is that right?

SB: The air force really didn’t want anyone to raise concerns about the MX project. For example, in 1981, just before the ’81 session of the Nevada Legislature started in the latter part of January, there was a briefing on the MX project for legislators in Carson City at the legislative building. I was on a panel to give the presentation on what the state of Nevada was doing, and the air force brought in a three-star general, Kelly Burke, to say good things about the MX missile project in Nevada. This was probably the first week of January, in 1981.

I got up and gave my presentation. I was, again, being neutral, but pointed out my office’s concerns with the MX Missile Project. I said “Here’s what our program is about, here’s what we’re doing, and we are assessing the impact of this project on Nevada. Not the strategic utility of the project, because we have no expertise on that, but we’re

looking at the impact on the natural resources of Nevada and the people, our way of life, quality of life, things of that nature.” I pointed out that we had some concerns, that these were our concerns, and I listed them.

Then General Kelly Burke got up and talked and then it was over. The room was full of legislators, and across the street from the legislative building was the Ormsby House Hotel and Casino. At that time, it was open. And the Governor Bob List and Kathy, his wife, were having sort of a meet-and-greet for legislators that were at this briefing. The legislators were to walk across the street for lunch, and the Governor and Kathy would stand in line and greet them as they came in for the hosted lunch. This was the governor’s way of getting to renew acquaintances with the old legislators and meet the new ones. So the governor was over there. I went back to my office after the legislative briefing on the MX missile project. I was told by the governor that a number of the legislators told him at the meet-and-greet line that they just had a briefing over in the legislative building on the MX Missile Project, and that they were really happy with the governor’s guy, Steve Bradhurst, who was directing the Nevada MX Missile Project Office. The legislators said, “It looks like he’s laid out a pretty good program for the state of Nevada, which is your program, so we are happy with you, Governor, with what you’re doing here in terms of how you’re assessing the MX missile project and being very professional.”

The governor called me after lunch and said, “I don’t know what you said, Steve, but whatever it is, keep saying it, because I am really happy.” Just after I got off the phone with the governor, I walked the one-star general I mentioned earlier, a brigadier general, in the air force. I believe the general’s name was Jim McCarthy. As stated, he was the point man for the air force on MX matters in Nevada, and he spent a lot of time

in Nevada. He walked into my office and said, "I want you to know that my boss, General Kelly Burke, wants you fired for what you said, for your presentation before the legislature at the briefing earlier today."

I said, "General, what did I say that was off base?"

He said, "I just want you to know that Kelly Burke and I are going over to the governor right now, and we're going to ask him to fire you."

So I said, "Well, okay." I didn't tell him anything about this phone call I just received from Governor List thanking me for my presentation at the legislative briefing. I thanked the one-star general for giving me a heads-up. My office was on the second floor, and I could see the entrance to the building out one of my office windows. The one-star general left, and I looked out the window, and below, standing, was the three-star general, Kelly Burke, waiting for him to come downstairs, then they headed off for the capitol building to see the governor. It gives you a sense of how these guys were so sure of themselves that they didn't want anyone to even be analytical, so to speak, or to raise any issues.

RM: So that was the problem, the analytical aspect?

SB: Just raising concerns and saying, "These are issues that need to be addressed, and we sure hope you're going to address them." That was January of 1981. And, as I said, in October of '81, President Reagan came on TV and said the federal government will not deploy the MX missile in Nevada and Utah.

RM: I would like to have been a fly on the wall at that meeting between the generals and List. He would have probably handled it diplomatically, but what would he have said?

SB: I don't know. Bob List never said a word to me. As I said, the turning point for

me was talking with Paul Laxalt. I'm convinced that Paul Laxalt, when it's all said and done, was the key player in keeping MX from coming to Nevada. The Mormon Church was important, too, since it came out against the project in the summer of 1981.

RM: I read that in the book; they were probably a big factor.

SB: For sure; very important. But I think the close relationship between Paul Laxalt and President Reagan was what really did it.

RM: Why did Laxalt go thumbs down on it? What was his thinking?

SB: I think Laxalt, when it's all said and done, is a true Nevadan. His parents were from rural Nevada.

RM: He didn't want to see the state adversely impacted, and he questioned the strategic utility of the proposed MX missile deployment mode.

SB: Yes, right. He was governor of Nevada. When he was governor, Ronald Reagan was governor of California and they were buddies. They would vacation together at Laxalt's cabin up in the hills overlooking Lake Tahoe. It was real rustic: they would shower outside and so forth. So they were really, really close buddies. Laxalt was known as Ronald Reagan's man in the Senate.

RM: Yes, I remember that.

SB: What's the old saying? Victory has a thousand fathers, defeat is an orphan. I think that is the case with the proposed MX missile project in Nevada and Utah. Everybody is running around saying, "I did this and that is why the MX missile project didn't come to Nevada," and so forth. A lot of people did a lot, and they were important, but I think it comes down to Paul Laxalt's special relationship with President Reagan. That is just Steve Bradhurst's opinion.

RM: I would agree with it. I followed it some and was shocked when that

announcement came.

SB: Like I said, the air force was really shocked. I mean, they were just upset to no end. When Senator Laxalt told me in the latter part of July that the MX missile project was not coming to Nevada I did tell my wife, Beezie, about it when I got back from Washington, D.C. She's a registered nurse, but she was not working during the time I directed the Nevada MX office because I was on the road a lot, and our children were preschool age. Once Senator Laxalt told me the MX missile would not be deployed in Nevada I told Beezie, "You're going to have to find your nursing cap and dust it off because I am going to be out of a job pretty soon." [Laughter]

CHAPTER THREE

RM: How long did you stay on with the MX program after Reagan's announcement that it wasn't going to happen?

SB: The announcement was October 1981, and we turned the lights off in the office in January 1982, three months later. Guy Rocha, the state archivist, said, "Steve, whatever you got over there in your office, I'll take everything you have. Just bring it over here, or somebody will come get it and bring it to the state archives." So my office files ended up in the state archives. As stated earlier, I was able to get positions for my staff in state government. I took off and went into the private sector in the latter part of January. We turned the lights off in the state MX office, and that was the end of that chapter of my life. There still existed a state MX office on paper at that time.

RM: What was that agency?

SB: Nevada State MX Missile Project Department.

RM: It still continued?

SB: Until they got rid of it legislatively in the next legislative session.

RM: Oh, I see, it was still on the books, so to speak. And then what was next?

SB: The fellow who used to be the director of the Regional Planning Commission of Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County was Dick Allen, just a prince of a guy. He had retired, and he wanted to go into business with me to open up a planning office as consultants. We opened up a planning office in February or March of 1982, and we were doing okay. But Dick really wanted to retire and business wasn't that great. And I found that my interest was more to helping rural Nevada, not so much working in the Reno area. I got to know a lot of people in rural Nevada because of my involvement with the MX project.

In early 1983, the federal government informed the State of Nevada that Yucca Mountain in south-central Nye County was one of nine potential sites for the nation's first geologic repository for high-level radioactive waste. In January 1983, Dick Bryan was Nevada's new governor. In early 1983, I talked to Andy Grose, a good friend who was Governor Bryan's chief of staff, about how Governor Bryan planned to address the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository. Andy asked me to put together a white paper on how the Bryan administration should handle the nuclear waste repository program based on my experience with the MX missile project.

So I did that. I put together some thoughts—what worked and what didn't work with the MX missile project. I strongly recommended that there be a professional, non-political team created that would work directly with the governor, that the governor would have control over it, like a cabinet-level department or, at a minimum, a consulting group. The Bryan administration did that. They went ahead and took a person out of the State Department of Energy—Bob Loux—and Bob brought in some consultants to work on the team. It was very similar to what we had for the MX missile project before the Nevada legislature created the Nevada MX Missile Project Department.

So I made that recommendation through Andy, and then I thought, "Well, shoot, this is an interesting project, and I think I can help my friends in rural Nevada, particularly Nye County where the action is going to be, with Yucca Mountain." So I contacted Nye County Commissioner Bob Revert.

RM: You had known him previously?

SB: He was on the MX local oversight committee as a Nye County representative. He and I knew each other a little bit because he would see me come to the meetings as the state representative on the committee. I didn't know him that well because Bob is sort of

a reserved guy, a quiet guy. I called him out of the blue, and I said, “Bob, it looks like the repository program is heating up, and Yucca Mountain is a potential site. If you don’t have anyone, I’d be interested in helping you guys out.”

This was in the summer of 1983. He said, “Well, Steve, come on and make a presentation to the county commissioners. Talk to Commissioner Bob Ruud beforehand, and then come on down and make a presentation, and we will consider it.” Well, I didn’t have a chance to cross paths with Bob Ruud. I went to a Nye County Board of Commissioners meeting in July in Tonopah. I’ll never forget that meeting. I was sitting there and presenting myself. Two out of the three Nye County Commissioners didn’t really know me. Commissioner Jane Logan maybe knew me, but not Bob Ruud from Pahrump—really a nice guy.

So I made my presentation. I told them, “I directed the state MX office so I’ve got some experience in how you deal with a large project, and I’d like to help you because you don’t have a repository program at this time. I’ll help you develop it and run it for you as a consultant.”

And they said, “Well, we’re interested.”

I had driven four hours, all the way from Reno to Tonopah, so I thought I’ll sit here for a while and listen to what else is on the commission meeting agenda. There was an item on the agenda that dealt with a large subdivision map in Pahrump. There was a reporter sort of midway between me and the commissioners in the meeting room. They were sitting at one end of the meeting room, and I was sitting at the other end of the room. The Nye County planning director had resigned just before the meeting, and therefore the county did not have staff input on the proposed large subdivision. So the Nye County commissioners asked me, “Steve, in addition to running the repository

program, would you be interested in running our planning program?"

RM: They asked you that?

SB: Right; because they didn't know what to do with that map. They knew I had a background in planning as assistant director of the planning commission here in Washoe County so they asked me for my thoughts on it. I asked them some questions: Does the subdivision have the necessary water? Does it have the necessary improvements in infrastructure and sewer and so forth?

So right then they said, "Steve, how about in addition to developing a repository program and running it, would you also be our planning director?"

I was sitting there thinking, "Well, shoot, I might as well." I said, "Sure, I'll give you a hand on that," which I probably shouldn't have. It took a lot of my time.

Then the commissioners said, "Well, what's your fee?" I hadn't given that any thought whatsoever. And the reporter was taking down every word as we negotiated a fee right there.

I really didn't do a very good job of protecting myself. I didn't give it any thought, and I just said, "Well, what about \$20 an hour?" That was really low, even for 1983. And I ended up having to pay for all my travel expenses, including transportation to Tonopah from Reno, as well as my room and board in Tonopah. So I think I ended up losing money on that deal.

For about four years, I was down in Tonopah every other week. I would drive to Tonopah from Reno on a Sunday morning and return to Reno on a Thursday evening. Bezie would prepare meals I could heat in my motel room. I'd stay at the Sundowner Motel, which had rooms with stoves and refrigerators. The county set aside an office for me as the planning director and also as the director of the nuclear waste program. I'd go

into my county office Sunday evening, and I'd work until 10:00 or 11:00 that evening, and then I'd work Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 or 9:00 p.m., and Thursday I would leave for Reno around 7:00 p.m. I would pack everything up in boxes, put it in the back of my car, and head back to Reno. I did that for nine years, but for the first four years I was doing it every other week. Gradually I was able to do it one week a month.

Along the way, I was able to sit down and talk to County Commissioner Bob Revert, who was, in my mind, one of the best elected officials I've ever worked with. Bob was sharp and he knew how to get to the bottom of issues. That's his forte, getting to the bottom of things. Regarding my pay, I would go down to Beatty every other year and I'd sit in his little gas station on a stool. I would say, "Bob, \$20 (or whatever it was) an hour is killing me. I'm losing money."

I'll never forget—Bob would say, "Whatever it takes, Steve," you know, within reason. So I was able to get my fee up to \$45 an hour or something like that. All this time I'm directing the repository program where my consultants are making \$100-plus an hour.

RM: I had no idea you were being paid that little.

SB: I just felt like Nye County didn't have much money, and the salaries of the county staff were low. Roy Neighbors was the county manager. And bless his heart, Roy thought I should have been a county employee for retirement purposes. I had built up some retirement in the state retirement system as a result of my work for the Regional Planning Commission of Reno, Sparks and Washoe County, and my time directing the Nevada MX Missile Project Department. Roy said, "Steve, why don't you be a Nye County employee?"

I said, “Roy, I’d do that except I don’t want you to be criticized for me living in Reno, even though I’m down here at least two to three weeks every month. And when I am in Reno I’m working on Nye County matters, too.”

Roy said, “You really ought to do that because you’ll protect yourself in terms of retirement.” I didn’t follow Roy’s recommendation even though for nine years I ran three Nye County departments, and, in 1998, I was the interim county manager for eight months. If I had followed Roy’s direction I would have received retirement benefits for directing three Nye County departments and serving as the Nye County Interim County Manager over a nine-year period. But I can sincerely say I am not complaining. Nye County treated me well, and I enjoyed helping Nye County address important issues.

I was not a popular person in some camps in Nye County because when I took over the county planning program in the summer of 1983, I started raising concerns about some of the projects I saw in Pahrump. I didn’t like the fact that they were developing these massive subdivisions without the required water and sewer systems. People were buying lots in these subdivisions sight unseen because they were buying them maybe in New York or Hawaii or wherever the developer had aggressive sales programs. When a purchaser would get to the point where he wanted to build on his lot, the purchaser was told by the developer, “Well, I’m sorry, but you can’t develop your property because there’s no water and sewer service to your lot,” even though the purchaser was told the lot had water and sewer service when he bought the lot. The developer would tell the purchaser who wanted to develop his lot that there was water and sewer in a small central core area, and if he wanted to develop his property he could trade his lot with no water and sewer service for a lot in the area where there is water and sewer service. But there was a “betterment fee” (they called it a betterment fee) and the fee was \$10,000 to

\$20,000 to trade the unbuildable lot for a lot with water and sewer service. This was even though when the property owner brought the property the U.S. Housing and Urban Development disclosure document clearly said that the property had sewer and water service.

RM: It did?

SB: It did. In fact, that really bothered me. I went to the state real estate division and said, “How can this be? You guys are supposed to regulate this—these HUD disclosure statements—and the developer is not telling the truth.” This was in the mid ’80s and they didn’t do anything. I went to the attorney general at the time, Brian McKay. I said to him, “Somebody has to look into this. This is wrong. All these people—tens of thousands of people—are buying these lots, and they are being told they have sewer and water service—here in the HUD disclosure statement—and they’re not getting it.” He didn’t do anything, and then I went to Scott Craigie, chairman of the Nevada Public Service Commission.

The developer for the property that I was concerned about in Pahrump also owned the water and sewer utility that was suppose to serve the developer’s subdivisions. That water and sewer utility was regulated by the Public Service Commission. So I went to Scott Craigie and said, “You know, the water and sewer utility that you regulate in Pahrump is suppose to provide water and sewer service to a large development that is owned by the company that owns the water and sewer utility and that is not happening.” The large development was owned by Preferred Equities Corporation, and its water and sewer utility was called the Central Nevada Utility Company. I told Scott Craigie that CNUC provides water and sewer service for a small part of the large development.

And the best I could determine, CNUC had no fire flow for the fire hydrants.

There were fire hydrants, but no water was coming out of them; and they had no water storage tanks. The developer and therefore the water and sewer utility said the fire flow was water that was backed up in the water transmission pipes. That is not adequate fire flow. Scott Craigie, Chairman of the Public Service Commission, started an investigation into the Central Nevada Utility Company, and through PSC public meetings on the utility we finally were able to put some daylight on what was going on, including stopping the deceptive advertising.

So the state real estate division looked the other way, the attorney general looked the other way, and it wasn't until I got to the Public Service Commission that, through a sort of circuitous route, we started to force the developer to disclose to folks that many of their subdivision lots did not have water and sewer service; hence, the lots could not be developed. The PSC also forced the utility to build adequate fire flow; that is, build storage tanks and repair existing infrastructure.

RM: Why do you think so many people looked the other way? Was it just that they had a really open attitude, kind of a laissez-faire, or were they actually crooked?

SB: I think it was more politics and influence. I think there were some very powerful politicians and land developers that supported the PEC development, and I think that nobody wanted to irritate the politicians and land developers. So the people who could have cleaned up the mess looked the other way. That is my guess; I could be wrong.

To underscore what I just said I need to tell you that a number of folks involved with the Preferred Equities development in Pahrump wanted Nye County out of the picture as it related to approving subdivisions in Pahrump. Some of the powers-that-be in Pahrump went to Nye County Commissioner Bob Revert and asked that he terminate my contract with Nye County. I was apparently causing some Pahrump developers heartburn,

including Preferred Equities Corporation. My position was if you want the Nye County Commissioners to approve your subdivision map, and the subdivision lots require water and/or sewer service, then you have to build the water and/or sewer systems, or provide an iron-clad financial guarantee that the system or systems will be built. Bob refused to terminate my contract, and in fact he asked me to continue to make sure Nye County never approved another subdivision that had the problems we saw with the subdivisions that needed but didn't have water and maybe sewer service.

Soon after Bob's refusal to have Nye County government look the other way regarding land development in Pahrump, there was a bill introduced in the 1985 Nevada Legislature to strip the Nye County Board of Commissioners of its authority to approve subdivisions in Pahrump. The subdivision approval power was to be given to the Pahrump Town Board. State Senator Ken Redelsperger, land developer in Pahrump, sponsored the unique and in my mind distasteful bill. He was able to get the bill approved by the 1985 Legislature, and it was signed by Governor Dick Bryan. Everyone knew exactly the purpose of the bill; that is, get the Nye County Board of Commissioners out of the business of approving subdivisions in Pahrump because powerful or influential people wanted that to happen. The thinking was the Pahrump Town Board would be more likely to approve Pahrump subdivisions without requiring the land developer to build the necessary subdivision improvements.

Fortunately, the Nye County Board of Commissioners challenged the law that stripped it of its land development approval authority in Pahrump, and the Nevada Supreme Court ruled the law was unconstitutional. The Nevada Supreme Court said the Nevada Constitution clearly states you can't give a power to one entity and not all similar entities in the state. The Redelsperger bill only stripped Nye County of its authority to

regulate land development in one town, Pahrump. Other towns in Nevada were not given this authority, including towns in Nye County. Nor were other counties stripped of their land development regulation authority in towns. I have a ton of respect for the Nye County commissioners, who did not cave in when pressure was applied to them to continue the old practice of approving subdivisions without a guarantee (financial or actual construction) that water and sewer systems needed to develop a lot would in fact be built.

RM: Let's go back and talk about your recommendations in 1983 to Governor Bryan's office on how the state of Nevada should address the possible development of the nation's first geologic repository for high-level radioactive waste at Yucca Mountain in south-central Nye County.

SB: In January 1983, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy sent letters to all the states that had candidate sites for the first nuclear waste repository. I believe there were nine sites in six states. Therefore, the governors of six states received the letter. The letter in essence said, "Greetings, you have a potential site for the nation's first geologic repository for high-level radioactive waste." As I stated earlier, I was asked by Governor Bryan's chief of staff to put together a white paper, at no cost to the state, on how the state of Nevada should address the proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository—another example of my ability to make money as a consultant. [Laughter]

RM: Where did you get your data? What did you use to think it through?

SB: I relied primarily on my recent experience directing the Nevada MX Missile Project Department. The Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository was another large, unwanted federal project that might be coming to Nevada. The question that was posed to me was, "You pulled all of these state agencies together to address the MX project. You

worked with local governments; you worked with federal agencies and so forth. The Yucca Mountain Repository Project is almost a duplicate, except it's the Department of Energy instead of the Department of Defense. So tell us about your experience and how you think we ought to address this unique and potentially dangerous project.”

So I made recommendations that were very similar to what I had said worked for Nevada in addressing the MX Missile Project, which was to have an office that's dedicated to the repository program working directly with the governor and not going through all the layers of state bureaucracy. The point I tried to make was it was critical for me as the director of the state MX office to have the ear of the governor on a regular basis. In fact, when I ran the MX office Governor List and I would have breakfast every other week. I had to have his undivided attention for at least an hour every other week. Because I had so much to tell him, and he was so busy that I just needed that quality time with him. I even told him if he was jogging in the morning I would be happy to jog with him.

RM: You would jog with him. [Laughs]

SB: I made the offer. I had an apartment in Carson City. I put in such long hours—I had to be in the office early in the morning to conduct business because of the three-hour time difference back East. I had to be on the phone sometimes at 6:00 in the morning because it was then 9:00 on Capitol Hill or in the Pentagon.

I told Governor Bryan's office, “You've got to have an office that works directly with the governor, and there's got to be a close tie between the director of the repository program and the governor.” That is what we did with the MX project, and it worked. As I stated earlier, at first my MX office was a consulting team working for the governor and then the 1981 Nevada Legislature made the office a cabinet-level department.

So I provided Governor Bryan's office my white paper, and then I circled back a couple of months later and talked to his chief of staff, who had asked me to develop the paper. I asked what they were going to do about the proposed Yucca Mountain Repository, and it was apparent to me that politics was the most important component in their decision equation. I think it was because Governor List, with MX, tried to take a neutral role early on, to look at the pros and cons of the MX missile project, and he got beat to death by people who were anti-MX. They said he couldn't make a decision, that he wasn't strong in his opposition. In my mind he was trying to be fair and look at all sides of the MX project; that is, look at the potential positive and negative impacts of it. And, as I said earlier, in time he could see that the negative aspects of the project were troubling. It took a while for him to see the MX project was going to have a significant adverse impact on Nevada. It took time because the governor did not have the comments of the 400 Nevadans who reviewed the MX EIS until the summer of 1981.

What may have happened with Governor Bryan is he just came off the campaign trail in late 1982, beating Governor List over the head for his equivocating on the MX Missile Project. Governor Bryan may have said to himself in early 1983, "I don't want to be in that position in four years, so we've got to take a position that we are for a repository or we're against it. We're not going to be in the middle." And they took the position that they were against it, almost from Day One.

RM: That is so important, what you're just saying.

SB: That's my opinion.

RM: But it is an important opinion. Do you have a copy of that paper?

SB: No. It was before I had a computer, and I don't know if a copy exists.

RM: Is there any way we could dredge it up? Would the state archivist have it?

SB: It is possible the state archivist has it because the white paper was for Governor Bryan's chief of staff. I don't even know if Governor Bryan was aware of the white paper, but his chief of staff was a guy who liked to turn over all the rocks. Whether he held on to it or not, I don't know.

RM: It would be nice if we could find a copy somewhere because it's the first one in the state, isn't it? It is the foundation paper. It sounds like it was influential.

SB: It could be that I left it in the files with the Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Office. In July 1983, when I started to develop the Nye County Repository Program, I filed a lot of information in the Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Office in Tonopah. We were always bringing in new file cabinets because I just believe in holding onto stuff. Whether or not that exists now, I don't know, because here we are 27 years later.

RM: And computers weren't functioning then like they are now.

SB: Now I could pull up anything on my computer that I've prepared in at least the last ten years.

RM: This is really interesting. Mike Voegele knows a lot about Yucca Mountain because he was there from very early, if not the beginning, as the head engineer-scientist. Like me, he never throws anything away, and he says he's got a whole garage of stuff on Yucca Mountain. I have suggested to him that he should write the history of Yucca Mountain from the government's perspective because he's smart and he's got the documentation. Plus, he has the motivation.

I think his book would be one volume. Just thinking out loud here, what you're talking about dovetails with his subject matter. What would happen if you guys co-authored a book on it? Yucca Mountain needs to be analyzed in detail.

SB: Bob, it strikes me that you're onto something there about the early years, which are so critical to the Yucca Mountain project. And it's the intergovernmental aspect of the federal project that in my mind is so important. That is, what was happening at the local government level; what was happening at the state and the federal government levels; what was happening in Congress? If you had a document prepared by some of the key players in those levels of government on what worked and what didn't work that would be interesting, and may be useful in the future.

I would be happy to help because Nye County was certainly in the bull's eye for the Yucca Mountain Repository Project. We were ground zero. I can only help you from the beginning, say 1983, to 1992. I left the Nye County repository Program in the summer of 1992 to run for the county commission in Washoe County.

RM: By then the fat was in the fire. I think the fat went in the fire with your document and Bryan's perception of what happened with MX. From what you're saying, I think the die was cast very early on. Plus, he and Reid saw political opportunity there.

SB: I don't know if Bryan ever read my document.

RM: But maybe his advisors did, and it helped them.

SB: My document might have helped the Bryan administration in terms of setting up a state organization to address the project. My white paper did not consider the politics of the repository project; it was based on what worked in helping the state address the technical aspects of the MX Missile Project. So this would have been more of a structural thing for the state in terms of how they should internally handle it. If I were governor at the time of the MX, I would have done exactly what Bob List did. That is, I would have brought somebody on, and I would have said, "I want you to lead a team to address the technical aspects of the proposed Yucca Mountain Repository, and leave the political

aspects of the project to me.”

RM: We are going to take an honest look at it.

SB: Yes. If I was the governor I would have said, “We are going to bring on somebody that’s going to be working directly for me and is going to have a highly qualified technical staff. Then if this thing looks like it’s going to go, we’re going to institutionalize this office, from just consultants working directly for the governor to being a state agency working directly for the governor as a part of state government. And by the way, all state departments, you go the extra mile to help the state repository office. If the person directing the state repository program needs something from you, you give it to him. This is another one of those projects that could adversely impact the state, and the state needs to step up and make sure it addresses the project properly.”

RM: You said Governor List did that with the MX Missile Project, and he was criticized for not taking a position for or against the MX in the early part of the MX project. And before Bryan is even inaugurated, the repository bill is passed, and some suggest Governor Bryan said, “I am not going to have happen to me what happened to List on the MX project. Moreover, I’m going to make hay out of this.” Chic Hecht told me that it was Bryan who was the key factor in setting the state against the whole thing. It wasn’t Reid. Reid didn’t even attend that first meeting; he sent a representative.

SB: Governor Bryan was certainly opposed to the Yucca Mountain Repository Project. Remember it was Dick Bryan who called the amendments to the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act that were passed in 1987 by Congress the “Screw Nevada Act.”

RM: What a good political title for something, if you’re trying to get your position across.

SB: Yes. But, in his defense, if you consider the contents of the 1982 Nuclear Waste

Policy Act and how the Act was amended in 1987 to ensure Yucca Mountain would be the only site in the nation for a repository, you would be unhappy, too. Congressman Mo Udall was the father of the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act and he insisted on having the Act require two repositories so one place would not have the burden of storing all of the nation's nuclear waste. His 1982 bill called for regional or geographic equity. That is, make sure the two repositories are located in different parts of the country. The 1982 Act called for the first repository to be built by the late 1990s and the second repository would be built soon after. Then suddenly in 1987 you have members of Congress saying, "Well, we're going to stick it to Nevada, and therefore let's forget about looking for other sites for the first repository and let's abandon the plan to have a second repository." That action by Congress via the Amendments Act of 1987 was at a minimum irritating to Nevadans, including Governor Bryan.

RM: And you've got valuable firsthand information on that.

SB: I was there. In the summer of 1987, I attended the Senate/House conference committee meeting where the amendments to the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act were discussed—that is the Amendments Act of 1987. I heard Congressman Derrick Butler from South Carolina say at the conference committee meeting, "We know what we want to do, and that is stick the repository in Nevada at Yucca Mountain. Let's stop looking at the other finalist sites and go with Yucca Mountain." The other finalist sites were in Hanford, Washington, and Deaf Smith County, Texas.

Everyone at the meeting signed off on that recommendation, and out in the hall after the conference committee meeting Congressman Mo Udall said, "We have done a terrible thing to good people." So in my mind, power politics on Capitol Hill got in the way of implementing the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act. Nevada did not have much

power on Capitol Hill at that time, and therefore I think the powerful took advantage of the powerless.

RM: It looks like you and Mike Voegele and others have the ability to put together a real analysis to show what happened and what went wrong with the Yucca Mountain project—if, in fact, it's never built—and how the government could spend that kind of money on nothing.

SB: The Department of Energy made mistakes at the front end of the repository project, and certainly Congress did not help matters with the Amendments Act of 1987. Everybody thought that the pattern, the template, for the high-level waste program was going to be the successful low-level radioactive waste repository program that was based on a bill passed by Congress in the late 1970s. That bill required states to come together to find mutually agreed-upon regional sites for low-level radioactive waste repositories. The bill did not allow states or Congress to gang up on a state and force it to have a low-level radioactive waste repository. The bill called for low-level radioactive repositories to be located in various regions of the country, and the host states had to accept the low-level radioactive waste repository.

CHAPTER FOUR

RM: Steve, your discussion of working on MX and how that dovetailed into Yucca Mountain has been very interesting. Here you were, the state's guy on MX, and then suddenly the new governor, Richard Bryan, wanted you to prepare a paper on how he should approach Yucca Mountain.

SB: Bob, I'll have to make it clear that his chief of staff asked me to prepare a white paper. It was Andy Grose; I didn't talk to Governor Bryan. This was early 1983, and as stated earlier, the state of Nevada, along with other states, received letters from the secretary of the Department of Energy saying, "Greetings. Your state has a site that potentially will be the nation's first high-level radioactive waste repository."

RM: Jumping forward now, let's talk about your work for Nye County. You said earlier you were hired by the Nye County Board of Commissioners to develop and run the Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Program. Was your Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office located in a county building in Tonopah, kind of at the lower end of town?

SB: Nye County gave me the county planning office, which was next to the jail, in the old county courthouse. It was set below ground, no windows, and I could hear the prisoners on the other side of the wall. I remember one time when Daniel Ellsberg and others who protested the underground testing of nuclear bombs at the Nevada Test Site during the mid-1980s were arrested by the Nye County Sheriff's office and placed in jail cells next to my office. I was working late at night in the office and I could hear Ellsberg and his companions in the cells. Seems like they were doing a lot of singing. So that was my first office, something like a dungeon in the county courthouse next to jail cells.

RM: And then they moved you later.

SB: Yes, they moved me later. I wanted windows. [Laughs] It's a little hard working without windows. So I ended up in the road department office, which was really nice, an old building with plenty of windows. I worked with Coe Logan, a great human being who helped me a lot. In fact, I have to say that the people in Nye County government bent over backwards to make my life as easy as possible. Whether it was running the planning program or the repository program, whenever I needed assistance from the county clerk, the county assessor, the county manager, you name it, they were there. I was able to get Ron Williams, who was a draftsman with the county assessor's office, to work in the county planning department. Ron, as you know, was a first-class county employee and planner, and he later became the county manager; he retired last year.

RM: Yes. Initially, what were your duties as their Yucca Mountain man?

SB: Well, they didn't have a program, so I had to develop a program for them. My initial effort was to try to get my arms around what it was DOE was proposing—that is, how was the Department of Energy planning to implement the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982? So I had to spend some time with Department of Energy staffers.

But at the same time I realized that, the way the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 was written, everything had to flow through the state. Therefore, the state was the first point of contact in Nevada for the Department of Energy on all repository matters. The person who was the director of the Department of Energy's repository office, called the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, really didn't want to deal with local government. The law said that that person was supposed to deal with the affected states. So the director of the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, or OCRWM, would deal directly with Bob Loux, who was running the state office. The OCRWM director would not involve units of local government in his efforts to

implement the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982.

RM: Did Bob Loux become the state of Nevada point person on the State of Nevada Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Program?

SB: Yes, Bob was the person that Governor Bryan appointed to direct the state repository program. Bob had been in the State Department of Energy. The governor's office did more or less what I suggested in my white paper; that is, the state created a special repository office to report directly to the governor.

RM: Do you think that your paper influenced that?

SB: I really don't know.

RM: And Bob Loux's position was analogous to your position for the state in the MX program?

SB: When I took the state MX office job in the spring of 1980, I was a consultant, and then became a state employee when the legislature created the MX Missile Project Department in June 1981. Bob was a state employee when he got involved with the state nuclear waste repository office, and he hired other state employees to work in his office. He also contracted with consultants to work on specific topics like transportation, geology, hydrology, and socioeconomics. In time the Nevada Legislature made Bob's office a state agency.

So initially I had to work with a number of parties. I had to work with Bob Loux and his staff to get a feel for what the state was doing, because, as I said, it looked like DOE information and money was flowing through the state. There was federal money for local governments to be involved in the program, but DOE insisted the states decide what local governments would get the funds, and how much. When I asked the Department of Energy for the ability to ask for money to come directly to Nye County, they said no, it

had to go through the state because the Nuclear Waste Policy Act said that the states were directly involved, not local governments. It appears local governments were really an afterthought in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982.

A number of local governments got involved, but certainly in my mind, Nye County was, as far as local governments, first among equals—because the county had Yucca Mountain, the proposed site for the repository. I worked closely with Bob Loux's office, particularly with Joe Strolin, who was Bob's lead staffer on local government issues. I also made a concerted effort to work with the OCRWM staff in Washington, D.C. Early in the project the OCRWM staff was located in Washington; OCRWM had not set up an office in Las Vegas at that time.

DOE held a number of conferences and meetings, and I tried to attend them in order to secure information on the project, as well as communicate with local government and state representatives from the other proposed repository sites. I made sure the information I collected was provided to the three Nye County Commissioners and Roy Neighbors, the county manager, so they knew what I was doing and had a better understanding of the DOE project.

And then I started to develop the repository program for Nye County, and we created the Nye County Nuclear Waste Project Office. At the same time, as I said, I was running the Nye County planning office. So I was down in Tonopah every other week for about four years dealing with the Nye County planning and repository programs. The other two weeks of the month I worked out of my office in Reno. I traveled a lot for the repository program, particularly during the weeks I was not in Nye County. I was in Carson City, I was in Las Vegas, I was in Denver, and I was in Washington, D.C. a lot.

RM: How did you find the state officials, and also the federal officials? In a way, you

didn't have official papers.

SB: Right. No portfolio.

RM: How did they respond to you in these early years?

SB: I think the state was nicer to local government than the feds. I think that's because of the nature of the beast. The governor knew that he had to work with local governments. And Bob Loux knew it made sense to work with local governments. I feel DOE felt local governments should be seen and not heard, and that everything had to flow through the state. We just were not getting any attention from the DOE. They didn't come to our meetings; they didn't communicate with us directly. So early on, we had to scratch and claw to get any attention from the DOE. It was really unfortunate and unnecessary.

As I stated earlier, a problem with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 was that the Act left out local governments, for the most part. A state is important, but a state doesn't provide certain critical services to the citizens like emergency services, courts, jails, social services, etc. Money was set aside for the state of Nevada to be involved in the repository program, and then local governments had to go hat in hand to Bob Loux and ask Bob if we could receive some of the money that was coming to the state so that we could be involved in the federal repository program. Fortunately, Bob Loux and Joe Strolin set aside some of the federal funds the state received from DOE for local governments to be involved in the repository program.

RM: At the federal level, you were mainly dealing with DOE. Were you dealing with other federal agencies as well?

SB: Early on it was primarily the Department of Energy. As time passed we also worked closely with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the U.S. Department of

Transportation.

RM: Do you remember any names in DOE that you interfaced with?

SB: The first DOE repository staffer who worked out of Las Vegas was Don Vieth. I communicated with Don and some of his staffers as much as possible. I also communicated with the person who directed the DOE Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management.

RM: Was Don Vieth directing the OCRWM office in Vegas?

SB: Yes. And the director of OCRWM was located in the DOE headquarters building in Washington, D.C., and the person in the OCRWM Las Vegas office reported to the OCRWM director in Washington, D.C. There were many OCRWM directors from the start of the project in 1983 to its end a few years back. To be the Director of the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management you had to be confirmed by Congress. The powers that be in the federal government didn't pick just anybody to be the OCRWM director.

RM: Out of the bureaucracy, you mean?

SB: Yes, out of the bureaucracy, exactly. Most of the OCRWM directors were from outside government. In general, the OCRWM director served a couple years and left. The director would leave and go back into the private sector, but his lieutenants would remain in government service, and many of them would go off to some other federal agency. There didn't seem to be any continuity to the OCRWM Director's office in terms of having a core group of deputy directors there year after year.

RM: So that made it difficult to really communicate.

SB: Yes, it did. And as I said, the fellow who was running the Las Vegas OCRWM office made a point of telling local government that he really only had to work with the

state. He said “Don’t come to me for funding to be involved in the federal repository program. You’ve got to go to the state.”

I felt he had the wiggle room in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to provide funds to units of local governments. I did not envy the state when it put some of its DOE repository money aside for local governments to be involved in the repository program. It’s one thing to put some money aside for local government, but then how do you divide it up? In Nye County we were always saying that we’re it. We’re *primus inter pares*—first among equals. As I said, the Nye County relationship with the state was pretty good. I worked well with Bob Loux and his staff.

RM: Do you remember any names from his staff that you interfaced with?

SB: Joe Strolin was a person I worked with quite a bit. Joe was really a prince of a guy to work with. He ran the socioeconomic side of the program so we saw a lot of each other. Then we had people in Clark County government involved, and we had a consultant who represented Lincoln County who was involved. Early on, Lincoln, Clark, and Nye were the core group of local governments that were involved in the repository program.

Early in the repository program, probably in 1985, the Nevada legislature created a special legislative committee to oversee the Nuclear Waste Repository Program. And out of this legislative committee there were a couple of members who pushed for, and sponsored, the creation of the infamous Bullfrog County. I am talking about State Senator Tom Hickey and State Assemblyman Paul May. Both of them were from Clark County. I’ll never forget their names. [Laughter] They knew that in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act there was a section called “Payments Equal to Taxes,” or PETT, that said that when the program got to a certain point, the host local government—in this case, Nye County—

could treat the repository as if it was on private land and receive payments equal to taxes from DOE.

They'd have to speak for themselves, but what I recall in the legislative hearings on the creation of Bullfrog County is that they felt that the lion's share of payments equal to taxes money should go to Clark County. So the legislature in the 1987 session created Bullfrog County out of a portion of Nye County, and Bullfrog County contained Yucca Mountain.

RM: The big dog.

SB: Yes, they apparently felt the big dog should drink first out of the PETT bowl.

Then the little dog, Nye County, should get the PETT scraps.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: Let's talk a little more about Bullfrog County, because that was an interesting kind of sidebar in the whole experience.

SB: Actually, Bullfrog County was a blessing and a curse. It was a blessing because in 1987 Congress was amending the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982. The end result was the Amendments Act of 1987. Bob, you interviewed me in 1991 about the Nye County nuclear waste repository program, and in that interview I talked extensively about Nye County's involvement with the Amendments Act of 1987. It probably would be appropriate to attach that interview to this oral history because I'm sort of repeating some of what I said almost 20 years ago.

What Nye County did during the time Congress was working on the Amendments Act of 1987 was talk to the authors of the proposed Amendments Act during the spring and summer of 1987. At that time there were three finalist locations for the country's first repository: Deaf Smith County, Texas; Yucca Mountain, Nevada; and Hanford, Washington. I teamed up with the fellow who had my position in Deaf Smith County, Texas—Phil Niedzielski-Eichner—and with the fellow who had my position in Hanford, Washington area—Neal Shulman.

The three of us went to Capitol Hill on a number of occasions during the summer of 1987 to talk to the congressmen and senators writing the Amendments Act. We told them about the need for local governments to be protected and to be full partners in any repository program and not have to go hat in hand to a state to be involved. We told members of Congress the worst case scenario was if a local government was not in sync with the state, the state could say, "Well, that's just too bad. Even though the repository's

coming to your county, we're not going to pass any federal repository money on to you to be involved in assessing and mitigating the impacts of a repository.”

I was fortunate to have Elgie Holstein as our Nye County representative in Washington, D.C. starting in the summer of 1987. It was easier to have a consultant in Washington, D.C., who could go to a number of the meetings there than to have me flying back and forth, particularly with my other duties for Nye County. I had Elgie back there, and Elgie knew his way around Capitol Hill, and he met with federal agencies involved with the repository program, like DOE and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Elgie had worked for a congressman, and he had worked for the National Conference of State Legislatures. He had an excellent reputation, knew how to work with people, and he was sharp.

So we started to put together language that we wanted Senator Bennett Johnston, who was chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee, and Congressman Mo Udall, chair of the House Natural Resource Committee, to consider for inclusion in the Amendments Act. And we talked to other members of Congress to let them know what we wanted in the Amendments Act of 1987.

I contend Bullfrog County was a blessing at that time because the people on Capitol Hill were aware that the Nevada legislature in June 1987 passed a bill creating Bullfrog County, and that Nevada Governor Dick Bryan signed the bill. Members of Congress and their staffs knew Bullfrog County was created, as stated earlier, to make sure the lion's share of the PETT funds that were to go to the county hosting Yucca Mountain would go to the big dog, Clark County. Bullfrog County in essence had no population and just included Yucca Mountain. It was created out of a portion of Nye County. An astute observer referred to Bullfrog County as a “bag man” county that

would collect money for Clark County. The legislature and the governor looked a bit two-faced: being adamantly opposed to the Yucca Mountain Repository, but, at the same time, creating Bullfrog County to make as much money as possible from the repository program went to Clark County.

When I went back to Capitol Hill after Bullfrog County was created in early June 1987 and talked to senators and congressmen, I didn't really have to say much of anything. They sort of pitied Nye County for the raw politics that was occurring in Nevada, in terms of how Nye County was having a part of its county ripped away to create Bullfrog County. The Bullfrog County seat was going to be in Carson City, outside the county by some 300 miles, and there would be three county commissioners appointed by the governor: two from Clark County and one from Washoe County. [RM laughs]

So when I told members of Congress that Nye County needed to be protected in the proposed Amendments Act of 1987, the response was, "What can we do to help you?" I said, "Here's the deal. Now that Bullfrog County's been created, we'd like to change the law to make sure affected units of local government can deal directly with the Department of Energy in terms of flow of information, the provision of impact assistance, the provision of federal money to be involved in the federal repository program, and the ability to work directly with the DOE on repository planning and assessment matters."

They said, "We'll do it." Because they knew it didn't make an awful lot of sense for the local governments to through the state if the state was going to treat a local government like the Nevada legislature and governor were treating Nye County in terms of Bullfrog County.

The second thing we did is to say, "We want to specify the location of the units of local government that will receive federal funds to be involved in the federal repository

program. We recommended that the federal money that is earmarked for local governments to be involved with the repository program only go to the situs county and counties that are adjacent to the situs county. The reason we did that, again, is because Bullfrog County had been created at that time—this was July of 1987. So here we had Bullfrog County surrounded by Nye County.

The Amendments Act of 1987 was passed in the later part of 1987, and it included most of the Nye County–recommended changes to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, including the new provision that said only counties adjacent to the situs county can receive funds from the federal government to be involved in the federal repository program. Since Bullfrog County was created in the middle of Nye County that meant only Nye County was adjacent to the situs county; hence, only Nye County and Bullfrog County would receive federal funds to be involved in the federal repository program. Needless to say, Clark County and other local governments adjacent to Nye County were not happy with that provision of the Amendments Act of 1987. Clark County soon realized that it would not receive federal funds to be involved in the federal repository program as long as Bullfrog County was a reality.

Nye County, at the same time, had challenged the law that created Bullfrog County. We went to court, and a retired Nevada Supreme Court Justice, David Zenoff, was appointed by the Nevada Supreme Court to hear the case at the district court level. He ruled from the bench in early 1988 that the Bullfrog County bill violated the Nevada Constitution. He said, “This is the most absurd bill. It’s unconstitutional because the state constitution says whatever you do for one government you have to do for all governments.” And he said that there’s no other county in the state that has a county seat outside its county. There’s no other county in the state that doesn’t have people. There’s

no other county in the state that has its three commissioners living outside the county and appointed by the governor. So he ruled that the Bullfrog County bill was unconstitutional.

After the district court ruling the Nevada Legislative Commission met in the spring of 1988 to decide whether or not they wanted the Nevada Legislature to appeal Judge Zenoff's decision to the Nevada Supreme Court. By the way, Judge Zenoff was involved because the district judge who would have heard the lawsuit, District Judge Bill Beko, sent a letter to public officials when the Bullfrog County bill was passed telling them the bill was not legal. So I guess you can say he would not have been a neutral party if he heard the lawsuit.

RM: So that's why Zenoff came in, because it would have gone to Beko, who had been involved in Nye County for many years, including as the county's district attorney.

SB: Right. Beko couldn't hear the case because he had already stated his position on the Bullfrog County bill. I guess Judge Beko could not contain his distaste for the Bullfrog County bill when it passed, and he told people what he thought of the bill.

An attorney with the Nevada legislative counsel bureau, Frank Daykin, wanted the Nevada Legislative Commission to appeal the district court ruling on the Bullfrog County bill to the Nevada Supreme Court. The legislative commission is made up of legislators who meet on a regular basis when the legislature is not in session in order to conduct legislative business. As I said earlier, the legislative commission met in the spring of 1988, and the commission heard Frank Daykin recommend that the legislature appeal the district court decision to the Nevada Supreme Court. I presented the case for Nye County at that meeting, and I said, "Judge Zenoff's decision was pretty clear. The bill creating Bullfrog County is unconstitutional, and I think the Nevada legislature would be wasting the taxpayers' money with an appeal to the Nevada Supreme Court." I

said in addition to that, Bullfrog County is an embarrassment to the state of Nevada.

Fortunately, the legislative commission went with Nye County's recommendation and decided to not pursue the appeal. The bottom line is the Bullfrog County bill was unconstitutional and Bullfrog County disappeared after about ten months. The only remnant of Bullfrog County in my possession is an American Automobile Association map prepared in the summer of 1987 for the state of Nevada that shows Bullfrog County.

So Bullfrog County was in existence for maybe ten months. But, as I said, what that did is during that period of time, folks from Capitol Hill were in the process of amending the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982. I felt guilty after a while because people on Capitol Hill kept patting me on the back and sort of commiserating and saying, "We really feel bad about what's happened to Nye County, and the way you're getting roughed up by the Nevada Legislature and Governor Bryan."

So, as I said earlier, all I had to do was say, "Here's what we'd like to have you do with the bill." At the time, we didn't know that Bullfrog County was going to be dead. We said if Bullfrog County remains alive, at least Nye County will still be an affected unit of local government because with our proposed amendment Nye County would surround Bullfrog County. We knew all along what that would do, and that is, it would get Clark County's attention. That is, Clark County would be left out of the repository program, no longer an affected unit of local government. Therefore Clark County legislators would have to think twice about the existence of Bullfrog County.

I think, in the final analysis, when the legislative commission was considering whether or not to appeal the district court decision on Bullfrog County, legislators from Clark County on the legislative commission were probably told by the local government officials in Clark County, "Don't pursue this anymore. If Bullfrog County is legal, we're

out of the program, except for PETT money. We have no conduit to free federal funds to be involved in the repository program during the planning phase.”

RM: Prior to this, how much was Nye County getting through the state?

SB: Oh, boy, I think early on, in 1983, it might have been—I’m just guessing—\$50,000 to \$100,000. It wasn’t much; not much at all.

RM: Did that grow, up until 1987?

SB: Yes, it grew, but it wasn’t an awful lot. Because what the state did is they tried to involve as many governments as possible. The state decided to include other counties besides Nye County, like Clark County and Lincoln County as well as White Pine County and Esmeralda County, Eureka County, Lander County, Churchill County.

RM: Was Nye County getting payments equal to taxes, also called grants equal to taxes, money at this time?

SB: No, the PETT provision in the Nuclear Waste Repository Act of 1982 said it did not apply until DOE narrowed the potential sites for the first repository down to three sites. Then, the three local governments involved with the three sites could file PETT requests with DOE. Nye County and the Bob Loux’s office worked on the PETT issue in the mid 1980s.

Bob Loux’s office took the lead on PETT and hired a consultant who was a highly respected appraiser to determine the appropriate appraisal methodology to use on the Yucca Mountain Repository Project for taxing purposes. The expert appraiser was Bob Foreman, and he was assisted by other appraisers who had expertise in appraising unique property. The state repository office and a number of the local governments attended meetings with Bob Foreman and his associates. Bob Foreman and his team determined the appropriate appraisal methodology, with the help of the Nevada Department of

Taxation. The appraisal methodology selected treated the Yucca Mountain Repository Project like a utility that was in the planning phase.

In this state, when a utility is being planned, whatever taxes are generated go to the situs government. It's only when the utility is in operation—when it's moving power, for example, from a power plant across county lines—that the state comes into play, and then the state centrally assesses the utility. When that happens the Nevada Department of Taxation assesses the utility, and it distributes the tax money to the counties affected by the utility, for example, counties with power lines from a power plant. Also, the state gets a piece of the tax bill when a utility is centrally assessed. So the state repository office took the lead in developing the appropriate appraisal methodology for the Yucca Mountain Repository Project, which, as I say, was the utility appraisal methodology that was being used in Nevada. We even got a letter from Perry Como, director of the State Department of Taxation, that said, “We approve this methodology; go ahead and apply it.”

We applied it. I sent a bill to the Department of Energy for the period that it covered—from 1987 to about, I think, 1991. It was in the millions and millions of dollars. I have to go back and check, but it might have been something in the neighborhood of, maybe, \$50 million for that period.

The Department of Energy said no to the Nye County PETT bill. We said, “Here's the basis for the PETT bill. Here's the appraisal methodology. The attorney general signed off on it, the State Department of Taxation signed off on it. The Nye County Assessor signed off on the PETT bill, too.” We knew from public information on hand how much the federal government was spending on the repository project, and that information was used in appraising the project. We treated the repository project like a

power plant being built, with the cost of all the planning that goes into it the basis for the valuation. And even though Nye County was given the responsibility of preparing the PETT bill, and Nye County used appraisal methodology approved by its assessor and the State Department of Taxation, DOE said no to the PETT bill. Keep in mind, PETT funds were to come from DOE's annual appropriation to implement its nuclear waste repository program.

RM: That was the Washington DOE? Not Don Vieth?

SB: Right, the Washington DOE. They could see that, in time, the PETT obligation was going to be a big-ticket item. That's what Congress had in mind: payments equal to taxes. Congress said, "We're putting the burden of having the nation's high-level radioactive waste stored on your county, and if the repository site was on private land in your county the repository developer would have to pay taxes. So for this project, the federal government will pay taxes."

Here's an example where Congress made a commitment by way of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to provide the situs local government payment equal to taxes, and DOE backed away from paying the PETT bill; at least, that is how I see it. I should add DOE and Nye County did have an agreement on PETT after I left the Nye County Repository Program in 1992. That agreement provided Nye County annual PETT payments, but not based on the appraisal of the Yucca Mountain Repository Project as called for in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, as amended. The payments were considerably less than the PETT bill that was based on the utility appraisal methodology. I do not fault the Nye County commissioners for getting something instead of nothing from about 1993 to the end of the project in 2010. But it sure was a lot less than what the Nye County Assessor and the Nevada Department of Taxation said the federal

government owed Nye County.

RM: When did you start that appraisal process, do you recall?

SB: The appraisal process would have started, probably, in the mid-1980s with Bob Foreman working on it. Of course, when we started to talk about payment equal to taxes, the appraisal and money involved, some of the elected officials from Clark County (legislators and local elected officials) started to salivate. That's the reason for Bullfrog County. They were thinking, "Jeez, if there's going to be money coming from the federal trough, we need to get some of it." I heard that some of the Clark County legislators said, "We can't depend on Nye County getting as much money as possible out of the feds with the PETT provision, and we know how to do that."

RM: When did you submit the bill to Department of Energy? It was retroactive, right?

SB: Yes, it was retroactive. It was for the period 1987 to I believe 1991. As I stated, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 said once DOE got down to three sites, then the payments equal to taxes kicked in for the finalist counties.

RM: So the way DOE treated Nye County on the PETT provision was another early mistake, really, that DOE made?

SB: I agree. And as stated earlier, in 1992, I left the Nye County repository program to run for a seat on the Washoe County Board of Commissioners. Some say at that time I lost my sanity and intelligence when I decided to run for office. I told the Nye County commissioners, "I cannot run the repository program because I'll be running for office in Washoe County, and I will be pretty busy. And I can't run your planning program either." Ron Williams was more than capable of running the Nye County planning program, and the Nye County Commissioners needed to get someone else to run the repository program. I told the Nye County commissioners that I would continue to help Nye County

with its water program, and help, if requested, with certain aspects of the repository program.

I have not mentioned the Nye County water program, a program that started in 1989 when the Las Vegas Valley Water District filed applications for groundwater in Nye, White Pine, and Lincoln counties. The district wanted to transport groundwater from these counties to the Las Vegas Valley to support growth and development in the valley. The Nye County Commissioners created the Nye County Water Planning Department to assess and oppose the Las Vegas Valley Water District water importation project, and asked me to direct the department.

So in the summer of 1992, the commissioners said, "Fine. We'll have you continue to run our water program, and we'll get someone else to come in and run our repository program and the planning program." When I left the Nye County repository program in the summer of 1992 the PETT stuff was still out there, festering.

RM: Okay. They gave you a "no" in what year?

SB: I'd say it was 1991.

RM: So what did you do then?

SB: I talked to the commissioners and we were thinking of going into court, challenging it. There was some desire to do that, and we had looked into doing that, but there was a new board of commissioners that came on in 1992, and they decided to negotiate the PETT problem with DOE. The negotiations occurred after I left the program, and I believe there was an agreement in 1993 between Nye County and DOE where Nye County's PETT payment was something like \$10 million for the period 1987 to 1993, and then \$1 million a year for the next five years, and the agreement had to be renewed after that time. I could be wrong on the amount, but I am fairly sure the PETT

payment was nowhere near the PETT bill submitted to DOE in 1991.

RM: Whereas you had submitted a bill for \$50 million. So it was a fraction of the original.

SB: Yes, Nye County agreed to a lesser amount. I don't blame the Nye County commissioners for accepting a lot less because this was a time when the county was having financial problems, and the PETT money was sorely needed. They could see that if they went to court, two things could happen: they could lose, and also they could raise the level of awareness on Capitol Hill of the fact that the PETT bill would be large when the repository program was in the construction and operation phases and therefore PETT might be eliminated altogether by Congress. So I think what they did is they said, "Let's see if we can negotiate five-year payment deals, five-year agreements—that is, every five years have an agreement with the Department of Energy where we get something." As I said, Nye County was hurting financially. So they probably figured a bird in the hand's worth two in the bush.

RM: Who were the new commissioners?

SB: Around 1992, the Nye County commission went from three to five commissioners. I recall in 1992 the board members were Cameron McRae, Joe Maslach, Dick Carver, Dave Hannigan, and I believe Red Copass.

CHAPTER SIX

RM: Steve, earlier in our discussions, you were relating to me an interesting story from your MX days.

SB: Yes. One of the things that occurred during the MX period that involved Nye County is that Nevada Congressman Jim Santini wanted to have some of the members of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee—now it's called the House Natural Resource Committee—get a feel for how beautiful Nevada is and what might be lost if the MX missile were deployed in Nevada. So Congressman Santini contacted me and said, "Steve, I'm going to have three or four congressmen come to Reno. We'll set it up so the air national guard in Reno can fly them around, and you accompany them and lay out the route for the plane. Make sure it flies over the valleys that might be impacted by the MX Missile Project." Congressman Santini said, "Please make sure you go over some areas—this was in July—that have some vegetation and greenery and so forth, so they can see that Nevada is more than what some say, a flat, brown spot between the Rockies and the Coast." Santini said a lot of folks on Capitol Hill thought that there's nothing to Nevada, that it's a desert.

That would have been the early part of the summer of 1980. Congressman John Siberling, who was chairman of one of the subcommittees of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee and, I believe, Congressman Bruce Vento and Congressman Jim Henson from North Carolina—I remember those three—were on the plane. I introduced myself to them, and we jumped in the plane, a DC-3 with the National Guard, and flew around these various basins. It was July and it was really hot. We landed at Tonopah airfield, and, I'll never forget, we got off the plane probably around noon. It was close to

100 degrees, maybe more.

We had a congressional hearing, of all things, right on the runway apron. We had tables set out, we had the congressmen sit down, and we had District Court Judge Bill Beko there. And we had Joe Fallini, a rancher from Railroad Valley, and some other people from Nye County there. The congressmen took testimony from the people there about what they thought of the MX Missile Project and their concerns about it.

Then we were supposed to fly to Ely and have a similar meeting in Ely at the airport, but it was so hot we were told that it would be difficult to get our plane off the Ely airport runway because it was not very long. The Tonopah airport had been an army air force base during World War II, and it had a long runway. We did not have a problem flying back to Reno from Tonopah.

Summer flying in Nevada is pretty bumpy because of the thermals. I remember the DC-3 that we were in was up and down a lot. It had seats along the fuselage, so you sat with your back against the fuselage. And Congressman Siberling was a great one for taking pictures. Here we were all strapped in, and the plane was rolling and rocking and so forth, and Siberling was actually standing up, running from one side of the plane to the other, taking pictures of Nevada from the windows of the airplane. Congressman Henson was airsick; I remember that because he asked me for airsickness pills; I didn't have any. When we landed we gave him some, but it was too late. You're supposed to take them before you get sick, not after. That was just an interesting side note to the MX and Nye County: a congressional hearing in July 1980 at the Tonopah airport.

RM: Very interesting. You mentioned earlier today the chairmen of the Senate and House committees. Was it for Yucca Mountain or MX? I'd like to get your impressions of them.

SB: I mentioned the chairmen of congressional committees directly involved with the DOE Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Project. Congressman Mo Udall was the chairman of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. I spent some time with Congressman Udall. The job I had as the Director of the Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office gave me great opportunities to talk to members of Congress. I was one fortunate person to be able to go in and sit down with somebody like Mo Udall or Senator Pete Domenici. Pete Domenici was chairman of a subcommittee of the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee. That subcommittee was involved with writing the Amendments Act of 1987. The Chairman of the Energy and Natural Resource Committee at that time was Bennett Johnston from Louisiana. So I talked to Bennett Johnston and his staff, and I talked to Pete Domenici and his staff on the Senate side, and some other senators. Mo Udall was our focal point. Manuel Lujan was a congressman at the time, and he was on the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. We talked to him and other congressmen on that committee.

All I was trying to do was let members of Congress know that local governments existed in Nevada, that we felt we needed to have an ability, by way of federal law, to participate in the DOE nuclear waste repository program. I have to tell you, I remember a member of Bennett Johnston's staff, a fellow named Ben Cooper, saying to me, "Where have you been?" He said, "We haven't heard from local governments in Nevada."

Our response was, "Well, you're hearing from us now because you're amending the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982. But also, you really haven't heard from us before because the way the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 is written we don't have an opportunity to participate. For us to get funds to cover coming back to Washington, D.C., to see you and talk to you about our concerns, we'd have to get permission from the state

to use some of the state's repository funds for that purpose. It's not likely the state would encourage its local governments to talk to members of Congress to ask for the ability to deal directly with DOE instead of going through the state."

RM: This is a key point, Steve, because it's another flaw in the original legislation that helped predispose the whole thing, maybe, to the state it's in now.

SB: It was an honest effort, particularly, I think, on the part of Mo Udall. Nye County's first representative on Capitol Hill was Andrea Dravo. She had worked for Mo Udall and was his lead staffer in developing the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982. In 1983, Andrea went into the private sector. I had her as Nye County's eyes and ears on Capitol Hill starting in the spring of 1987. In the summer of 1987, she went to law school, and that's when Nye County hired Elgie Holstein. Elgie took Andrea's place. Andrea helped Nye County immensely in terms of understanding the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, including the House/Senate negotiations that occurred in developing the Act.

And she said that her boss, Mo Udall, really wanted to be fair to the people who would be impacted by the repository, and that's why there was regional equity and PETT. The thinking was one area, the West, would take the repository, and there would be an area in the East that would have to take the repository. Also, there would only be a certain amount of nuclear waste stored in a repository. So you wouldn't have all the nuclear waste in one area. That was in the bill.

But politics got in there, as I said, and when DOE started looking at the nine sites in six states, the sites in the East disappeared rather quickly. People living in the East were upset, and they complained and so forth. In the Northeast, the Department of Energy staff had to have highway patrol protection at meetings where siting a nuclear

waste repository was discussed. Folks were so adamantly opposed to the thought of having nuclear waste stored in their states—Maine, Michigan, places like that. And the East had a lot of power in Congress. So DOE rather quickly retreated from the East, and dismissed the candidate sites in the East and in the South. DOE went from nine sites to five sites and from five sites to three sites in short order. Pretty soon all we had were sites in the West—Deaf Smith County, Texas; Hanford, Washington; and Yucca Mountain. Remember the old adage, the powerful take advantage of the powerless.

As I mentioned, when they got to the point in 1987 when the conference committee looked at the two bills amending the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, the House Bill and the Senate Bill, Congressman Derrick Butler, from South Carolina, said in a conference meeting, “We know what we want to do. We want to stick the repository in Nevada. Let’s not talk about Deaf Smith County as a potential site, or Hanford.” And that was the end of it. It was over. Bennett Johnston was there with Alan Simpson, Pete Domenici, and other senators. Mo Udall and John Dingell and other members of the House were at the meeting. At the table there had to be six senators and maybe ten congressmen. No one from Nevada.

As I mentioned before, Bob, Bennett Johnston’s bill had impact assistance for the state that was going to be selected. It was something like \$50 million a year during the construction phase and \$100 million a year during the operation phase. When Congressman Derrick Butler said let’s go ahead and stick it in Nevada, not a single person objected to his statement.

Mo Udall didn’t say a word, and Bennett Johnston said, “Well, what about my bill, where we provide impact assistance to the host state?”

I’ll never forget, I was sitting behind Congressman John Dingell, and Mo Udall

was right next to him. John Dingell said, “We don’t owe those people a penny.” That was the end of the discussion on impact assistance to the state forced to host the nation’s first nuclear waste repository. No impact assistance. Later, Mo Udall was interviewed outside the conference room and as I said earlier he said, “We have done a terrible thing to good people.” He was quoted in the paper.

RM: Tell me a little about your personal meeting with Mo Udall. What was your assessment of him as an historical figure?

SB: The first time I saw Mo Udall up close was 1983, when I started to get involved with the program for Nye County. I went to a Department of Energy–sponsored conference in Washington, D.C., and Udall was one of the speakers. I didn’t realize that he had Parkinson’s disease. I was surprised, because his head was moving quite a bit because he was in the advanced stage of the disease. But he got up and gave a presentation, and it was spellbinding. It was just unbelievable. And his sense of humor—there are very few people I’ve heard who could give a speech as good as Mo Udall. Very sharp. He talked about the repository program, because he was the father of the 1982 Act.

RM: He was?

SB: Yes, I think you could say that. He talked about what he was trying to do and so forth. But he was just an amazing speaker. Later, when I visited him in his office, he seemed to have his Parkinson’s disease under control. (I guess he took medicine to control it.) He was as sharp as can be.

I attended a number of meetings with Mo Udall in his office. Mo Udall had run for president in 1976, in the Democratic primary. And I’ll never forget, the first time I attended a meeting in his office we had Deaf Smith County people with us. Mo Udall started talking about his campaign for president in the Democratic primary and his

adventures in Deaf Smith County, Texas, and about some of the people that he knew. He had great recall.

He was an interesting person to talk to. I agree with you, he was a giant on Capitol Hill and very, very intelligent. My guess is that, if he had been healthy, maybe what happened in the conference committee meeting in late 1987, where everybody piled on Nevada and also deleted his regional equity provision in the 1982 Act, would not have happened.

RM: He was at that meeting, right?

SB: Yes. He was the titular head of the House delegation at the meeting. He was sitting on the House side. He was sitting in the middle of the table and right across from him was Senator Bennett Johnston, who was the chair for the senators. They were opposing each other in the conference committee. But Congressman Udall didn't say a word at the meeting. All the talking came from other people. I just think he wasn't on top of his game.

RM: So there's another little pivot point in history.

SB: Yes. He had enough presence of mind to say later that they had done a terrible to thing good people. I'll never forget Udall. He always provided jokes before he'd get into a speech or discussion. He was great. He could tell great jokes. One time something came up about Alaska in a discussion. He said, "You know, I just got back from Alaska, and when I was there, people treated me a lot different than when I was there running for president in 1976 in the Democratic primary. This time, when people saw me, they waved with all their fingers showing." [Laughter]

But I have to tell you as we segue into water that there's another Arizonan that I found to be equally talented, in terms of being sharp on public policy, and great, in terms

of being so quick in wit, and that's Bruce Babbitt. I worked closely with Bruce Babbitt in the early stages of Nye County's effort to keep the Las Vegas Valley Water District from taking water from Nye, White Pine, and Lincoln counties for use in the Las Vegas Valley. In October of 1989, I was at the Association of Science and Technology Center's annual conference in Baltimore, at the Inner Harbor, with Nye County Commissioners Dick Carver and Barbara Raper. We were there because of the work we were doing on the proposed Nevada Science and Technology Center at Lathrop Wells.

The Nye County commissioners and I put a lot of work into locating a hands-on interactive science center at Lathrop Wells. We put a lot of work into the science center project. We were trying to spur economic development in Nye County with the science center, particularly in the Beatty, Amargosa Valley and Pahrump area.

So we were at this conference in Baltimore in October, and Roy Neighbors tracked us down at the conference by way of telephone and left a message that said, "Give me a call, quickly."

So I called him, and he said, "You won't believe this, but I just got word that the Las Vegas Valley Water District (which is the Clark County Board of County Commissioners—they're the same) have filed for a significant amount of water in Nye County, Lincoln County, White Pine County, and the northern part of Clark County. They want to transport groundwater via pipeline from the three rural counties via pipeline to Las Vegas to support growth and development in Las Vegas Valley." So I shared that message with Dick Carver and Barbara Raper.

Remember, at that time I was directing the Nye County Planning Department and the Nuclear Waste Repository Program. Dick and Barbara said, "We want you to put together a program to assess the potential impacts of this really massive water

importation project on Nye County.” I said I’d be happy to do that. And they said, “Let’s see if we can’t work in partnership with White Pine County and Lincoln County, where the three counties would get together and try to figure out if we should protest the Las Vegas Valley Water District applications for groundwater.

By the way, if you added up all the water requested in the applications, it was something like 800,000 acre-feet of water from about 146 well sites. In Nye County, Railroad, Hot Springs, and Reveille Valleys were going to be impacted. In Lincoln County and White Pine County a number of basins would be impacted, including Spring, Snake, Cave, Dry Lake and Delamar Valleys. Also a few basins in the northern part of Clark County would be impacted.

When I got off the plane from Baltimore, I talked to a highly respected water attorney in Reno and asked him if he was interested in helping us put together our case, in case we had to protest these applications. He said he would give it some thought, and then later I learned that he had signed on with Las Vegas Valley Water District.

[Chuckles] The Las Vegas Valley Water District was making a concerted effort to put under contract many of Nevada’s water attorneys and hydrologists. By doing that, those of us who might be opposed to the district’s water importation project would not have any talent to hire.

I started to put together a case, or a program. The Nye County commissioners met with the commissioners in White Pine County and Lincoln County, and we decided to work together as a team to assess the program, with me leading the effort. But Nye County essentially paid for the program.—Bob Revert, Dick Carver, and others just said, “This is really important for the future of rural Nevada, particularly Nye County, so we’re going to go ahead and put some money into this. And, Steve, you put together a team to

oppose the water importation project.”

So I did that. I put together a team to assess the impact of the project. We brought in a couple of attorneys familiar with state water law. Nye County contracted with George Bennish and Don Springmeyer, two highly respected water attorneys. We brought in Tony Rossman, an environmental attorney out of San Francisco who had provided legal assistance to my MX office in 1980 and 1981. Tony knows the National Environmental Protection Act inside and out. We knew that sooner or later the Las Vegas Valley Water District was going to have to get a right-of-way from the BLM for the project’s infrastructure and therefore the district and BLM would have to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and prepare an EIS on the project. Therefore, it made sense to bring Tony on board at the front end of the project.

Then Nye County contracted with a hydrologist, Dr. Marty Mifflin, who was familiar with water resources in rural Nevada. Marty put together a team that looked at the cost of the importation project, and the numbers were in the billions of dollars. Nye County contracted with Principia Mathematica in Denver to model the groundwater resources in the basins that would be impacted by the District’s groundwater applications. Nye County also contracted with a water conservation expert with the University of Arizona—Gary Woodward. The county contracted with these experts in order to support the contentions it made in its protests of the District’s groundwater applications.

We had received a schedule from the Las Vegas Valley Water District—this was 1989—that indicated the district wanted to have the state engineers start hearings on its applications in late 1990 or early 1991. As I said, Nye County protested the district’s applications. Nye County teamed up with White Pine and Lincoln Counties and held town hall meetings in the three counties in order to tell people about what we thought was

going to happen to rural Nevada if the district's water importation project was implemented, and what the three rural counties were doing to address the project.

In 1991, Nye County also hired former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt to be on its team of consultants. Nye County wanted the nation to know what Clark County was planning to do to its rural neighbors by way of its massive water importation project; that is, take rural Nevada's water and leave rural Nevada without a future. Bruce Babbitt was hired to tell that story. At the time he was the president of the League of Conservation Voters, and he was giving a lot of speeches in the United States. We asked him to include in his speeches the concerns rural Nevada had regarding the Las Vegas Valley Water District's unprecedented water importation project. Governor Babbitt did what we asked, and before long the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and the *LA Times* had front-page stories on how powerful Clark County was planning to deprive powerless rural Nevada of a future. A reference that Governor Babbitt used in his speeches on the water importation project that I particularly liked was his statement that, "The people in the Clark County government, the Clark County Commissioners, are treating the rural Nevadans as serfs, like they are our servants. That rural Nevadans are there to serve them, and these rural folks should not be concerned about their future."

I might add that one of the things we did soon after Babbitt became a member of our team was to take the team on a bus tour of the area that would be impacted by the district's water importation project. The tour involved town hall meetings in Clark, Lincoln, White Pine, and Nye Counties. It lasted two and one-half days, and with tongue in cheek we called it the "Steel Wheels Tour." (The Rolling Stones rock band had recently completed a performance tour in the United States called the "Steel Wheels Tour.") We met Babbitt at McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas with the bus.

Local Las Vegas TV stations interview Babbitt before he got on the bus.

We had about 35 people on the bus, including people from Owens Valley. The Owens Valley people had been involved with the historic water battles in Owens Valley between the City of Los Angeles and Inyo County. Owens Valley was and is the granddaddy of water importation projects in the United States. The impacts of Los Angeles taking water from Owens Valley and transporting it via canals to L.A. have been devastating to Owens Valley over the years, particularly to the Owens Valley's natural environment and economy.

We had standing room only crowds at our "Steel Wheels Tour" town hall meetings. People at the meetings were concerned about their future and the natural environment of their area because the district's plan would likely have an adverse impact on rural Nevada's economic future and natural environment.

Soon after our "Steel Wheels Tour" we had to submit protests against the district's groundwater applications to the Nevada State Engineer. The Nye County consulting team prepared a standard protest against the applications with probably four pages of reasons for the protest. We made copies of the protest form, and all people and organizations had to do was sign the protest form with a water application number on it. Over 4,000 people and entities protested the district's applications. Up until that time, the most protests ever filed against applications associated with a water project in Nevada were about 100. The 4,000 protests clogged up the state engineer's application processing system. The state engineer's office was not ready for that many protests and that kind of opposition. Most of the protestors used the standard form that the Nye County team prepared.

In Lincoln County the residents had fund-raisers to help Nye County fund its

team. Lincoln County government had limited financial resources, and the best the citizens could do in that county was have fund-raisers. They would actually go out—the cattlemen and the ranchers and so forth—and sell cows and do other things to try and generate revenue so that they could help contribute some money to the effort to oppose the district’s water importation project.

In White Pine County, the county commissioners put a question on the ballot that said something like, “Do you want to tax yourself to generate money to pay for the county’s opposition to the Las Vegas Valley Water District’s water importation project?” The White Pine County voters said yes to the ballot question; they approved the tax. I have to say, White Pine County residents have been aggressively fighting the importation project since Day One. Nye County has also been an opponent of the importation project, even though the District said it was not really interested in pursuing its applications in Nye County, including Railroad Valley.

RM: Why did they do that, do you think?

SB: I’m not sure. I think there were some environmental issues that were raised in Railroad Valley. In addition, the Duckwater Tribe in Railroad Valley protested the District’s Railroad Valley applications. Also, a pipeline from Railroad Valley to the district’s main water transmission line was going to be expensive. The district would have to build the pipeline over the Granite Range. It might also have been the district thinking Nye County would lessen its opposition to the water importation project if Nye County valleys were not going to be dewatered.

Dick Carver was a prince of a guy; he was the county commissioner who got out in front and led rural Nevada’s opposition to the water importation project. Dick was the face of the opposition. That’s what Babbitt recommended when he first met Dick Carver.

He said, “Rural Nevada needs somebody that people can identify with, that can get up and get out there and speak to the camera and therefore to the man in the street.” He said, “Dick, you’re that guy. People will see you on the camera, and they will know that you’re genuine. They know that you’re not a slick politician, that you’re really concerned about the future of rural Nevada—not just Nye County, but rural Nevada in general.” So we asked Dick, whenever the opportunity presented itself, to please get out there and talk from the heart about his concerns with the district’s water importation project. Dick was a very smart guy, and he had his facts down. I am convinced Dick Carver is one of the reasons the district’s water importation project is not a reality today.

I have a picture from the *Las Vegas Review Journal* of Dick standing nose to nose with Clark County Commissioner Paul Christiansen at a meeting in Las Vegas around 1991. The picture shows a humble, well-meaning, rural Nevada county commissioner, wearing jeans and a western shirt, standing up to a powerful Clark County commissioner wearing a coat and tie. Paul was the Clark County commission’s main advocate for the Las Vegas Valley Water District’s water importation project. The picture was taken at a meeting involving the county commissioners from Clark, Nye, White Pine, and Lincoln counties.

The purpose of the meeting was to see if we couldn’t get the county commissioners from the four counties to talk about the water importation project. We wanted the rural county commissioners to say to their counterparts in Clark County, “Do you understand what you’re doing here? We are concerned about the future of rural Nevada and the potential impacts.” I think the meeting was helpful in getting some of the Clark County commissioners thinking about the potential impacts of the water importation project on rural Nevada. But the project was not terminated and the Las

Vegas Valley Water District general manager, Patricia Mulroy, kept pushing for its implementation. Pat and I were speakers at a number of public functions in Las Vegas in the early 1990s. I would raise concerns about the project when I spoke, and Pat would talk about how great she thought the project would be for the Las Vegas Valley. More often than not, Pat would visibly become angry when I raised concerns about the water importation project.

To go back to Dick Carver, there is no question Dick was our leader. He just did a fantastic job of raising rural Nevada's concerns, and the general public knew Dick was speaking from the heart. Dick's hard work on behalf of rural Nevada regarding the water importation project and public land issues got him on the cover of *Time* magazine.

RM: Yes, I remember. In fact, I still have a copy of that magazine.

SB: Regarding Bruce Babbitt, he left the Nye County team in late 1992 in order to work for the Clinton administration. During 1992, Babbitt helped Bill Clinton with his presidential campaign, and when Clinton was elected president in November 1992, he asked Babbitt to be his secretary of the interior. Babbitt accepted the offer, and he was Secretary of the Department of Interior from January 1993 to the end of the Clinton administration, January 2001. The November 1992 election was also important to me personally. I was elected to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RM: After you were elected a county commissioner in Washoe County, did you still keep a hand in what was going on?

SB: Yes, I continued to direct the Nye County effort to oppose the Las Vegas Water District water importation project. I also helped Nye County with its repository program, primarily serving as Nye County's liaison with members of Congress. As I said earlier, when I decided to run for the Washoe County Commission position in early summer 1992, I told the Nye County Commissioners they needed to find someone to take my place as director of the Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Office, and also find someone to take my place as director of the Nye County Planning Department. The Nye County commissioners selected Les Bradshaw to direct the repository office in the summer of 1992, and Ron Williams became the director of the Nye County Planning Department in the summer of 1992.

I need to add that once Bruce Babbitt became the Secretary of the Department of Interior he could not personally be involved with any Department of Interior decisions or actions on the Las Vegas Valley Water District water importation project. The reason for that, of course, is the fact that Babbitt would have a conflict of interest. To my knowledge, he kept a good distance from the water importation project while he was Secretary of the Department of Interior. It was rare for Babbitt and me to communicate during the time he ran the Interior Department, and when we did, the communications did not include the water importation project.

In 1992, the local governments in Clark County decided to create the Southern Nevada Water Authority for the purpose of having a regional entity plan for, secure, and

deliver wholesale water resources to the area's water purveyors, including the Las Vegas Valley Water District. The Southern Nevada Water Authority's staff was the Las Vegas Valley Water District staff, and Pat Mulroy was the Authority's director, as well as the Las Vegas Valley Water District's general manager. The Las Vegas Valley Water District transferred its applications for groundwater from rural Nevada to the Southern Nevada Water Authority, and from 1992 on, the water importation project has been a Southern Nevada Water Authority project, not a Las Vegas Valley Water District project. By the way, the authority members come from the Las Vegas Valley Water District, Clark County, Big Bend Water Authority, City of Henderson, City of North Las Vegas, Boulder City, and the Clark County Water Reclamation District. Representatives from those entities serve on the Southern Nevada Water Authority.

It was a smart move on the part of the local governments in Clark County to create the authority, because the local governments were fighting each other over water resources for the future. In my mind, the creation of the authority is a good example of Pat Mulroy's ability to address difficult political problems in Clark County. Pat appears to be a master at being able to figure out what steps have to be taken to achieve an objective.

Of course, the objective in Clark County has always been, "Unlimited growth is good, and Pat, you go out find the water needed to support that growth." I feel the powers that be in Clark County feel, "What's mine is mine and what's yours is mine, too, if we are talking water." Did you know the Colorado River Compact, a congressionally approved compact signed in the early 1920s to allocate Colorado River water to seven states adjacent to the Colorado River, allocates 300,000 acre/feet of Colorado River water a year to Nevada? And all 300,000 acre/feet of Nevada's Colorado River water goes to

Clark County. Even though the 300,000 acre/feet is to go to Nevada per the Compact, none of that valuable water ends up outside Clark County in places like Pahrump in Nye County.

I mention Pahrump because it has a critical need for additional water resources, and some of Nevada's Colorado River water would save the day in that community. In the early 1990s, Nye County asked the Nevada Colorado River Commission to recommend to the federal government that the federal government allow some of Nevada's 300,000 acre/feet of Colorado River water be allocated for Pahrump. The federal government makes the decision on the allocation of Colorado River water in the seven compact states. The Nevada Colorado River Commission rejected Nye County's urgent request.

RM: Funny how that worked out. In theory, Pahrump could have received some of that water. Let's talk a little about your Washoe County commission work. How long were you a commissioner, and did you find the commission position rewarding?

SB: Bob, I decided to run for the Washoe County Commission District 1 seat in the spring of 1992 for three reasons: (1) the commissioner from District 1 decided not to run again; (2) Washoe County was addressing critical water resource issues that would impact all Washoe County residents for years to come; and (3) I felt it was time for me to be a policymaker instead of a person who made recommendations to policymakers. I had a great campaign team and little money for the campaign. We worked hard to give voters in District 1 information about me and my position on issues. Since we had little money, maybe a total of \$30,000, I had to do a lot of walking. I think I knocked on doors in District 1 every evening from July 1 to the general election in November. I was on the Washoe County Board of Commissioners from January 1993 to January 1997.

RM: Why didn't you run for another term?

SB: I found the county commission position to be the best job I have ever had, but I had to face the fact that the position was all consuming. As a commissioner from District 1 I served on the Washoe County Board of Commissioner, the Lake Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Board of Governors, and the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Governing Board. Each board had a staff and numerous meetings every month. I truly enjoyed serving the residents of Washoe County on these boards, but I realized after a while that my consulting business was taking a real beating. I would not do consulting work in Washoe County because of possible conflicts, and I could not help Nye County like I wanted because I could not leave Washoe County due to the constant meetings. Also, my daughters entered college in 1993 and 1995, and I needed to make a few more bucks to help pay their college expenses. The end result was my decision not to seek re-election for a second term that would have started in January 1997. It hurt to leave the commission position because I felt I was doing some good, but it was the right decision for me and my family.

RM: You mentioned briefly the fact that I interviewed you in 1991, and the interview was on the repository program. You were still directing the Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office at the time of the interview, and I recently read the transcript of the interview. Here we are almost 20 years after the interview, and I find your 1991 comments on the repository program revealing and insightful even today. With your permission, I would like to include that interview as an appendix to this oral history.

SB: Bob, I recall the 1991 taped interview in the Nye County repository office in Tonopah. You certainly have my permission to attach it to this oral history, particularly if my comments in the heat of battle in 1991 can be helpful.

RM: Let me ask you another question about Bullfrog County. Would you have gotten what you wanted in the Amendments Act of 1987 if Bullfrog County never happened?

SB: I don't know, Bob. I really don't know. It's an interesting question. I believe Bullfrog County helped the rural counties in terms of their ability to participate in the federal repository program. And I don't say it because one senator or one congressman said they felt bad about how the Nevada legislature and Governor Bryan had treated Nye County. I say it because all of the members of Congress I talked with in the summer of 1987 felt bad about what had happened to Nye County.

RM: Did you actually submit a list of the changes you wanted in the amendments act?

SB: Yes.

RM: Is there any way to get a copy of that list for the archives?

SB: I'd have to dig it up. But, as stated earlier, I believe most everything we requested was inserted in the Amendments Act of 1987. When I received a copy of the approved Amendments Act of 1987, I was shocked that our language appeared, almost verbatim, in the legislation. My guess is Governor Bryan and his staff were shocked, too. We did not tell the governor, his staff, or other local governments what we were doing on Capitol Hill in the spring and summer of 1987. Now that I think about it, the Nevada counties that were given the authority to be directly involved with the federal repository program as a result of the Amendments Act of 1987 should have sent a letter to the Nye County commissioners thanking them for making that happen. Once Bullfrog County was eliminated, the Nevada counties adjacent to Nye County became affected units of local government along with Nye County per the Amendments Act. The counties that are adjacent to Nye County are Clark County, Lincoln County, White Pine County, Eureka County, Lander County, Churchill County, and Esmeralda County. Also, Inyo County in

California became an affected unit of local government because it borders Nye County on the west.

RM: Once a county became an affected unit of local government per the Amendments Act of 1987, the county was able to receive funds from the DOE. What did the affected units of local government do with the money?

SB: Initially the money allowed the affected units of local government to get a better understanding of the proposed Yucca Mountain Repository Project. They had money to attend DOE meetings, visit DOE officials, visit members of Congress, and disseminate repository information to their citizens. And then the affected units of local government started to work with the state on possible socioeconomic impacts of the repository project during the construction and operation phases. The state contracted with a firm to prepare a socioeconomic impact assessment report, and the affected units of local government were given the ability to participate in that study, to help select the consultants to work on the study, and also to read all the documents and provide comments on the documents. The state repository office went the extra mile to make sure the affected units of local government were involved in the state initiated socioeconomic impact study.

The Nye County repository program was also concerned about the socioeconomic impacts of the federal repository program on Nye County's communities. To get an understanding of the socioeconomic impacts of the federal repository program on Nye County communities one has to have baseline socioeconomic information on the communities that might be impacted. I am talking about Beatty, Tonopah, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump, at a minimum. Fortunately for Nye County, a fellow named Dr. Robert McCracken had the foresight to recommend Nye County prepare histories of these

towns based in large part on oral histories of the old-timers who lived and worked in the towns.

Bob, as you know, your recommendation was submitted to the Nye County Board of Commissioners in I believe around 1988, and the commissioners contracted with you initially to prepare a book on the history of the town of Tonopah and to collect oral histories from a number of the old-timers who lived at one time in the Tonopah area. I have to say you and your team did an excellent job with the oral histories and the book on the history of Tonopah.

As you recall, when we tried to get the Nevada Press at the University of Nevada, Reno, to print the oral histories and the Tonopah history book we were told the press was too busy to do the work. So we created the Nye County Press, and the Nye County Press published the Tonopah history book. We had the state prison in Carson City print and bind the first batch of oral histories. The prisoners in the print shop did an excellent job. Then the commissioners contracted with you to collect additional oral histories from old-timers throughout Nye County and prepare histories of other towns that might be impacted by the federal repository project.

I consider the oral histories you prepared to be priceless, not only to Nye County but also to the families of the oral history subjects. The oral histories and the town histories are a must-read. All of this information provides important baseline socioeconomic information on Nye County towns. The town histories and oral histories help answer a number of questions, like: What is this place, Nye County? What's the history of Nye County and its towns? What's unique about Nye County and its towns? What's precious and valuable about Nye County and its towns? RM: Thanks for the kind words about the Nye County Town History Project. It's been a real pleasure for me

to do that work.

SB: I believe there is no question a number of Nye County's towns would be impacted by the construction and operation of a Yucca Mountain Repository. For example, some of the communities were slated to have a railroad running near them and the trains on the tracks would be carrying high-level radioactive waste. Also, a number of towns would see big trucks come through their community carrying nuclear waste, not for a year or two, but for 20, 30 or more years.

RM: Do you remember the truck argument, the shipping, being an issue at that point? Harry Reid has brought it up a lot in more recent years. Was it always a pretty big item on the table?

SB: I remember one issue was about how far away you could stand for a period of time from a truck carrying nuclear waste canisters and not be contaminated. The response back from DOE was that you would be fine if you stood next to a truck with high-level radioactive waste as long as you did not stand by the truck for hours. The concern was not so much standing next to one of the nuclear waste trucks for hours, it was the cumulative impact of being exposed to trucks carrying nuclear waste over a period of years.

There was concern about accidents. I know that DOE had all kinds of tests that they conducted, where they had trains run into trucks carrying nuclear waste canisters, and they had nuclear waste canisters fall out of the sky and so forth to see what would happen to the canisters. As I recall, the canisters were robust and did not split open.

Clark County representatives said, "We don't want rail traffic through Clark County, nor do we want any of the truck traffic through Clark County." So if Clark County had its way all of the nuclear waste had to be transported on Nevada's narrow

rural highways that went over a lot of mountains or by rail through rural Nevada. It didn't make an awful lot of sense to transport nuclear waste on unsafe rural roads. But DOE appeared to go along with Clark County's position.

That was an issue just on the safety of travel, having these big trucks—oversize vehicles—and not have roads that are built for them. I left the program in '92, but it seemed like at that time the effort was to try to get most of the nuclear waste canisters on rail because that was a safer and easier way to transport the material. But, as indicated, DOE was focused on building a new rail system in rural Nevada in order to avoid shipping nuclear waste on the existing rail system in Clark County. No nuclear waste would be transported through Clark County and Yucca Mountain is located outside Clark County, some 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, but Clark County legislators created Bullfrog County to make sure PETF funds would go to Clark County.

RM: I always thought Clark County's argument was a little bit disingenuous—"We don't want this coming through Las Vegas"—in view of the fact that there are large numbers of nuclear bombs stored at Nellis. [Laughs] How did they get there?

SB: Nevadans would be surprised to learn what is being transported through their cities and towns today. I am talking about explosives and chemicals that could kill people.

RM: And how does all of that cyanide they use for heap-leaching the gold get out to Round Mountain? It doesn't drop down from the sky. Any more about the program while you were still involved in it for Nye County, before you left in '92?

SB: I guess I was fortunate. I think the program was at a point where I could leave. We had pretty well set up a comprehensive Nye County nuclear waste repository program. We had an office. We were actively involved in all aspects of the repository

program from 1983 to 1992. We had a good understanding of how Congress, DOE, the Nevada legislature, the state of Nevada, and its local governments addressed the nuclear waste repository issue from 1980 to 1992. We had a good group of consultants working for us, including Planning Information Corporation looking at socioeconomic impacts. And we were able to write Nye County into the 1987 Amendments Act and indirectly to eliminate Bullfrog County.

And we had a good working relationship with the state repository office. As I mentioned earlier, the person who took my place was Les Bradshaw, who was a deputy district attorney in Nye County.

RM: How was he selected?

SB: I don't know how that occurred. All I know is when I left in early summer of '92 to run for office in Washoe County, the Nye County commissioners appointed one of my consultants, Phil Niedzielski-Eichner, to run the Nye County repository program on an interim basis. I think Phil ran the Nye County repository office during the summer of 1992, and Les Bradshaw was selected by the commissioners to be the new program director in the fall of 1992.

RM: By the time you left, how much money was Nye County getting in payments equal to taxes and how much from other sources?

SB: On payments equal to taxes, it was zero. When I left we were gearing up for a lawsuit against the Department of Energy for not honoring the county's PETT bill based on the appraisal that was certified by the State Department of Taxation and the Nye County Assessor.

As for the repository program, I'm guessing Nye County received around \$700,000 from the DOE to be involved in the repository program during federal fiscal

year 1992. The Nye County commissioners felt from the start of the repository program in 1983 to when I left the program in 1992 that it was best not to create a Nye County bureaucracy to run its repository program. The commissioners did not know how long the federal repository program would be active, and they felt Nye County could not hire the needed specialized expertise as county employees who would have to live in Tonopah or Pahrump. Therefore, the concept for the Nye County repository program was to have consultants involved, so that if county commissioners woke one morning and found the federal repository program was over, Nye County wouldn't have a lot of employees that they'd have to take care of or they'd have to let go.

I was always a consultant, from '83 till when I left the program in 1992. I had a person who was a county employee in the county repository office. She was also the secretary for the county planning program and the county water resource planning program.

But with respect to rest of the people who worked on the Nye County repository program, they were consultants. Nye County had an excellent consultant team, and it included Jim Williams and George Blankenship with Planning Information Corporation out of Denver; Phil Niedzielski-Eichner out of Washington, D.C.; Elgie Holstein out of Washington, D.C.; Mal Murphy, an attorney out of Olympia, Washington; and Dr. Robert McCracken out of Tonopah. Nye County never used all of the repository money it received from DOE each year. When I left, we were gearing up for geotechnical work. We were starting to bring on consultants with expertise in hydrology and geology.

RM: Did Les Bradshaw come on as a consultant?

SB: He was already a county employee; he was a deputy district attorney. I think he had some knowledge of the repository program as a deputy district attorney. I'm guessing

that Les is probably the one that reviewed all the contracts that I sent to the DA's office for review.

I need to say that I was fortunate to have great secretaries who were able to handle the three Nye County programs at one time. The first secretary was Cheryl Hammon. She moved to Denver and was replaced by Gretchen Loeffler. Gretchen stayed with me for about five years and she moved to Washington state. Gretchen was replaced by Shirley Crawford, and Shirley worked for me and the Nye County Road Department at the same time.

RM: How do you look back on your years up to the time you left, as part of your life and experience?

SB: I've given that some thought. I really have been fortunate to have been involved in programs that were of critical importance to Nye County and the state of Nevada. Think about it: in 1980, I directed the Nevada MX Missile Project Office for the state, a front-burner issue for the state and its local governments was the possible deployment of man's largest project, the MX missile project. From 1983 to 1992, I directed the Nye County planning program, the Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office, and the Nye County program to oppose the Clark County effort to take water from rural Nevada for use in Las Vegas Valley.

MX, nuclear waste and water resources—those three topics were critical issues for the state of Nevada and its local governments from 1980 to 1992. The Yucca Mountain Repository Project is still a controversial issue in Nevada, and the Clark County or Southern Nevada Water Authority effort to take water from rural Nevada is most definitely a front-burner issue in the state at this time.

I can't express my gratitude enough for the fact that Bob List asked me to run the

state MX office in 1980. And I am forever grateful to Bob Revert and other Nye County commissioners like Dick Carver for allowing me to be involved in Nye County's planning, repository and water issues since 1983. I do have to say that there were times when I ran the state MX office, as well as when I ran the three Nye County departments, that some of the people I dealt with caused my stomach to turn somewhat and they probably made my ulcer act up a little bit. But my north star was doing some good for my clients, the state of Nevada and Nye County.

And, I believe, most of the Nye County commissioners appreciated my efforts. There was politics involved at times, but for the most part the commissioners were a pleasure to work with. As I mentioned earlier, I worked with some great Nye County commissioners. Certainly at the top of the list would be Bob Revert and Dick Carver. If I was in a foxhole and I needed somebody to protect my back, they would be the guys I would want in the foxhole with me. Their word was good at all times, and they were honest. They wanted to do what is right for the county. They were just good people to work for.

So I think the personal experiences I had, the people I worked with, including you, over the period of time with Nye County have enriched my life immensely. People say, "Well, wouldn't you rather be doing this or that?" And I would say, "No."

In fact, when I was asked in the summer of 2007 by the chair of the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, Nye Commissioner Joni Eastley, to be the executive director of the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority—an eight-county unit of local government—I said yes without hesitation. Joni asked Midge Carver, who knows me fairly well, "Do you think Steve would be interested in the position?" Midge's response to Joni was, "You've got to be kidding. Steve loves to help rural Nevada." Dick Carver

passed away in January 2003, and the governor appointed Midge to take Dick's place on the Nye County Board of Commissioners. Midge was a superb Nye County commissioner.

The Central Nevada Regional Water Authority addresses critical water resource issues in rural Nevada, including the still-active Southern Nevada Water Authority water importation project. Another reason I said yes to the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority position was the 20-member Authority board of directors. I knew some of the board members, and they are typical rural Nevadans—honest, smart, and concerned about the future of rural Nevada. Joni Eastley has all of those qualities and much more. She has been the authority's chair since its creation in 2005.

To sum up, I have been blessed to have worked on interesting and important projects in the state of Nevada over the last 30 years. Also, I was fortunate to be a county commissioner in Washoe County, and I am excited about my continued involvement in Nevada water resources issues as the executive director of the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RM: Let's discuss the concept that a local government or area has a right to an economic future. Take Nye County, for example. Doesn't every entity have a right to some kind of economic future? Otherwise, you have nothing. And by the state's actions on working against the Yucca Mountain repository at every step of the process, they have taken away, or limited for a foreseeable time, the future in Nye County. How would you react to that statement?

SB: That's a tough one. We go back to what we were talking about earlier, and that is that these entities, I think, have a right, within their means, to try to have an economic future as long as they don't hurt anyone else—their neighbors and the state in general. And I think, on the repository, that would be the issue from the state's perspective. That is, "Sure you might want to have a repository, but there are some issues we have at the state level, such as transportation in the urban areas and through the rural areas and any stigma that might come from it." So there are some issues out there that involve more than just a local government or an area.

RM: Yes, but those issues, to my satisfaction anyway, have been shown to be spurious.

SB: What I'm saying is there are some things that local governments can do where it doesn't impact other areas whatsoever. There are other things that local government would like to do where you have to consider the impact on other areas.

For a county or a city to be successful in terms of their economic future, they've got to take care of their environment. They've got to make sure that their natural environment is not destroyed. They've got to make sure that they have the resources for economic activity—that would be water, as well as good air quality and so forth. Nobody

wants to move a business to a place where you can't see the mountains ten miles away because the air quality is so poor. Or, that the area's water resources are going to be exported someplace else.

RM: But, in fact, they do, Steve. Denver is an example.

SB: I lived in the L.A. basin in the early '60s and it was just God-awful. And, at least in my understanding, there are a lot of businesses that said, "If we could get out of here, we'd get out of here, because I'm tired of choking on the air and taking an hour to drive 20 miles."

RM: But not very many of them did.

SB: Yes, but if they had an option they would, if they could find a place. That's why I think you get to the point where we are now. Local governments have certain things that they need to put on the table to appeal to business. And one is that the people who come and work in the businesses have to be happy with the place that they live.

RM: Well, they should be, but they're not, because they just did a poll a few months ago in Vegas, and 40 percent of the people said they'd move if they could.

SB: Well, particularly now, because the economy is not doing well. I heard, on the radio or TV this morning, this guy talking about the downturn in the economy. He was being interviewed, and he said, "You know what I'm going to do?" With a lot of people losing jobs, he said, "I'm going to go back to my office right after this interview, and I'm going to tell my boss how good-looking he is." [Laughter] So everybody's hunkering down, you know, because you want to hold onto your job.

RM: I don't think Vegas's downturn was driven just by that. I think it was driven by a quality of life concern: no parks, people aren't friendly. I'm pretty jaded, but sometimes I'm shocked at how rude and impersonal they are in Vegas.

SB: I live in Reno, and many of the businesses and retired people say they moved to the Reno area because of the quality of life. And I'm saying to the locals, "Don't spoil your nest. Don't make it so that you can't see the beautiful mountains, the High Sierras. Don't screw up the university system so Nevada can't supply educated and skilled people for businesses that might locate in Nevada. And don't mess up the K through 12 school system so we don't have good teachers and buildings to educate children. And don't take the Truckee River and turn it into a sewer with untreated urban runoff and leaking septic tanks." You'd be surprised at the number of people who go down to the river in downtown Reno to sit, fish and recreate. People are drawn to that amazing community asset. In the summer I bet there are well over 1,000 people a day who are drawn to the Truckee River. They sit next to the river, they swim in it, they float down the river, and they visit commercial establishments next to the river. My point is a community has to have a decent quality of life to keep and attract people. If the community's quality of life is in the toilet you can bet its residents would not hesitate to leave if they could.

What I'm saying is that these local governments have a right to the future, but they have to have certain community assets to at least have an opportunity to improve their economy. A critical asset is an adequate water supply for the current and future residents. The Southern Nevada Water Authority is in essence telling rural Nevada we want your water because it would be better for us to grow than for you to grow and even exist.

A fellow came to Reno two years ago from some big consulting firm in Portland, Oregon. He prepared a study that looks at places that are livable and good for development. And he said, "You know what, Reno and Sparks are livable today, but in the future, you've got to go in brain first." His statement. He said, "When you start

developing, you've got to go in brain first. Don't make stupid mistakes with your development plans." He said, "Preserve your exceptional quality of life, don't destroy it. Don't just build and build for the sake of growth and ignore what makes your region livable. He mentioned the Denver area's growth over the recent past as an example of what not to do.

RM: Yes, Denver did not go in brain first. I grew up partially in Denver, and you could see the mountains every day if it wasn't raining or something. When I left in around '80, more often than not you couldn't see the mountains or you'd see a little vague outline there.

SB: As I told you, I graduated from high school in Washington, D.C., in 1961 and I had an opportunity to play some basketball for a college in L.A. I went there in the fall of '61 and I'll never forget—you could not see the San Bernardino Mountains that were maybe ten miles from the college due to smog.

RM: And where were you in L.A.?

SB: In the Azusa/Glendora area.

RM: Yes, that's a smog hole.

SB: Right. The smog sirens would go off, and most organized outdoor activity would be stopped due to the smog. The smog felt like you swallowed a piece of dough and it was stuck in your throat. I thought, "Who would want to live in that environment if you had an opportunity to live in a place with clean air?"

RM: Well, millions, of people. I guess they had a choice. I don't know. [Laughs]

SB: So I say you don't want to spoil your nest.

RM: I was there in '68, in Long Beach, and I could smell the refineries. My daughter lives there now. The air is a lot better than it was.

SB: Yes, I think today it is, even in the Azusa/Glendora area. And a lot of it's just because of the improvements to automobile engines; there's a lot less pollution from vehicles.

RM: That's right. You mentioned Representative John Dingell—he fought all the government-imposed emission controls, every one of them, for years.

SB: When Dick Bryan was a U.S. Senator he pushed for auto fuel and emission efficiency regulations. The auto industry has a big presence in Dingell's congressional district in Michigan. But Dingell's 1987 statement at the conference committee meeting on the Amendments Act of 1987 was not because he was mad at Dick Bryan. Remember, Dick Bryan was not a U.S. Senator at that time. He was the governor of Nevada. I don't know why Congressman Dingell was strongly opposed to providing impact assistance to the state of Nevada if Nevada ended up with the repository. As stated earlier, he has a reputation of not being friendly to state and local governments.

RM: Let me ask you a kind of anthropological question. You have worked in both urban and rural Nevada. In your opinion, which population best represents the “true Nevadan?”

SB: I have found over the years that a lot of people in our so-called big cities underestimate people from rural America. Remember Bruce Babbitt's comment when he first got involved in the Clark County/rural Nevada water fight in 1990. He said, “Clark County appears to want to treat rural Nevadans like their serfs.” Regarding who is the real Nevadan, I would say a real Nevadan can live in rural and urban Nevada. To be a real Nevadan I believe you have to love Nevada's valued natural environment and have the intestinal fortitude to have an open mind on any issue. In a nutshell, a real Nevadan loves the land and is an independent thinker. So in many ways there is not a difference

between folks who live in rural and urban Nevada. When I directed the state MX office, I saw rural and urban Nevadans come together for the good of the state, and the only difference I witnessed was their attire. I see the same thing happening now with people from rural and urban Nevada coming together to oppose the Southern Nevada Water Authority water importation project. People from rural and urban Nevada have a lot in common, and they are proud to call themselves Nevadans.

RM: Steve, I'd like to talk to you about the museum, because I think that's a part of the whole Yucca Mountain project and your work for Nye County. Like Yucca Mountain itself, I don't think the museum is dead.

SB: In the early part of the repository program, from everything we read and heard, it looked like the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Project was going to happen. And certainly it picked up steam in 1987 with the Amendment Act of 1987, when Congress narrowed the repository sites down to one site, Yucca Mountain. So it was obvious that there was no place else other than Yucca Mountain, and that the powers that be were moving ahead really forcefully to make it happen. And then with every schedule that we got our hands on, it looked like the repository would be built by the late 1990s.

One of the things that we tried to do in Nye County was to figure out, "Well, what do we do to try to help the economy of Nye County, particularly the area near Yucca Mountain that might possibly have a stigma attached to it?" It appeared the nation's first high-level radioactive waste repository was going to be in Beatty's backyard and Amargosa Valley's backyard, so to speak. We thought that it was possible businesses might come to Beatty or Amargosa Valley and say, "No, I don't want to put up with trains and trucks coming through here carrying nuclear waste and the possibility of having an accident."

So we started looking around, and we thought, “Well, gee, what is it that we need to do here, even if we don’t have a repository, to help the economy of this area?” We looked at the traffic flow up and down Highway 95; looked at all the increase in visitation at the Death Valley National Monument. And then, when Death Valley National Monument became a national park, the visitation numbers increased to over a million people a year. And Death Valley is close to Amargosa Valley and Beatty.

Then there was the fact that there wasn’t a place for the public to go to get information on the Nevada Test Site, particularly the nuclear bomb testing at the Nevada Test Site. The Nevada Test Site is a significant part of Nevada’s history and, for that matter, the history of our country.

At the intersection of U.S. Highway 95 and State Route 373 in Amargosa Valley one could see Yucca Mountain, the Nevada Test Site, the Nellis Air Force Gunnery Range, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge with Devil’s Hole. That intersection, which is called Lathrop Wells, is unique, not only because of its proximity to interesting and historic places, but because of the desert landscape with sand dunes and the clear night skies with stunning views of the stars.

I went to a couple of Association of Science and Technology Center conferences to get information on the world of hands-on interactive science centers. I visited a number of interactive science centers in the United States. I soon learned the meaning of the old Chinese adage, “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.” I went to a number of the Association of Science and Technology Centers classes on how to plan for, build, and operate a science center.

I recall my visit to the Exploratorium in San Francisco, a world class hands-on interactive science center. One of Robert Oppenheimer’s brothers, Frank, was the father

of the Exploratorium. I couldn't believe the energy that was in that building. It's by the Golden Gate Bridge. The kids and adults were all moving around, touching the exhibits. You could watch people who were making exhibits. The energy level was super high in the Exploratorium.

I was enthused about the idea of having a science center in the Lathrop Wells area. It appeared to me a science center at that location would be economically viable, and it would greatly enhance the quality of life in southern Nye County. A science center in the Lathrop Wells area could provide information on the Nevada Test Site, the Nellis Air Force Gunnery Range, the Navy Top Gun School in Fallon, the Yucca Mountain repository project, the natural environment of the area, renewable energy, and the night sky.”

The Nye County commissioners approved the science center concept. And the DOE said, “Well, this is a legitimate effort to try to address maybe the adverse impact of having a nuclear waste repository in the Lathrop Wells area.” Therefore, Nye County was able to use some of its DOE repository money on the science center project. Nye County told DOE that we would have information in the science center on the nuclear world, including the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository.

Nye County contracted with E. Verner Johnson and Associates to develop a concept plan for the science center, and later the firm was asked to develop the building plans for the center. E. Verner Johnson was the premier architect for hands-on interactive science museums at that time. The county also contracted with West Office Design out of Oakland to prepare the exhibit master plan for the science center. The Nye County commission created an advisory committee to work with me on the development of the center. We had a lot of people from Pahrump, Amargosa Valley, and Beatty on the

advisory committee. E. Verner Johnson and West Office Design gave presentations to the advisory committee. The development of the science center was an enjoyable experience. The enthusiasm was always high, and everyone could see the benefits the science center would have for the Nye County and state of Nevada economies.

We changed the name of the science center from the Nevada Science and Technology Center to the Desert Space Station. The science center was designed to look like a space station that had just landed in the desert. It was designed to showcase renewable energy, particularly solar energy. The space station was going to have solar panels that would light up at night on the roof. During the day, the panels would absorb the sun's rays and generate electricity. At night the temperature difference in the various panels on the roof would show up as light, and they would produce different colors. The space station was going to be a good distance from the Lathrop Wells intersection, and therefore it would be sitting by itself in the desert.

We worked with the National Park Service. We figured out how many of the Death Valley National Park visitors would likely visit the space station. It looked like those visitors alone would make it economically viable. That is, the space station was going to be able to operate on its own without a subsidy. We wanted to get the space station plans completed as soon as possible in case DOE was given final approval to build the Yucca Mountain Repository. We were told that when that happened Congress would set funds aside for Nye County to help the county mitigate impacts of the repository, and that the Desert Space Station would be eligible for those funds. We needed to tie up the BLM land selected for the Desert Space Station site. We were able to get BLM to set aside a 580-acre site in the Lathrop Wells area for the science center.

We had planned interesting outdoor exhibits, including an exhibit on the desert

floor close to the museum. The exhibit was a maze, where you'd see the maze inside on a large screen. A person entering the maze would get a GPS locator to take with him or her. Let's say Uncle Harry and Aunt Mary are down there and that they're A and B on this big screen. You could watch them go through the maze and see what mistakes they're making trying to get out of the maze. That exhibit would have something to do with probability, and I guess the pure pleasure of seeing Uncle Harry get lost.

I put a lot into the science center project. A lot of people worked on it, and I feel bad because it was in the can ready to go. At the time, the cost of the Desert Space Station was around \$30 million. Nye County was ready to move forward with this unique hands-on interactive science museum.

We contacted the Clark County School District, and they said they would take students to the Desert Space Station during the school day. The driving time from the northwest part of Las Vegas Valley to Lathrop Wells is a little over one hour in a bus. The students would have a day-long adventure with the drive to the science center, a couple hours at the center, including lunch in the center's restaurant, and the drive back to school. The center was going to have an IMAX theater and a planetarium, in addition to many hands-on exhibits.

The science center even had a section on the Top Gun School in Fallon. Center visitors could get inside a cockpit that looked like an F-18 cockpit. Then they would put their helmets on, and they'd think they were actually flying a high-performance military jet.

The Desert Space Station was going to be used for local community events. The nearby communities—Pahrump, Amargosa Valley, and Beatty—could use the science center for special events. We wanted to work it so that kids could be there and camp out

overnight in order to have an experience of staying in a museum overnight. And we were also going to have an RV park next to the science center so people could visit with their RVs and stay for a day or two.

RM: What happened to the funding on it?

SB: Well, as I stated, we were able to get federal funding through DOE for the planning and architectural work. We created a nonprofit corporation called the Nevada Science & Technology Center, and it still exists today. I'm the president. I keep the nonprofit, the 501(c)(3), alive. I fill out the tax forms every year. If the repository was going to go, we felt fairly positive, that we were going to get funding from Congress to build the science center. And the \$30 million needed to build the science center would not have been an issue with Congress, but the science center sure would have been a boon to the area's economy.

When it looked like it wasn't going to go, I went on my own nickel and flew to various cities, talking to people like Siemens Corporation to try to do some fund-raising. I talked to the Siemens people at their office near Newark, New Jersey, because that German company was a leader in solar energy, and I was told a lot of Siemens employees in Germany had visited Death Valley. Siemens showed some interest, but I could not get the fund-raising program off the ground. We needed seed money to have a first class fund-raising program. I spent a lot of time at economic and tourist trade shows in Nevada showcasing the Desert Space Station. We had a professional exhibit on the science center, and I even displayed the exhibit in the Nevada Legislative Building during the 1999 Session. The 1999 Nevada Legislature passed a resolution in support of the science center. I saw a lot of excitement, but no money to back it up.

RM: Did you do all of the fund-raising and exhibit work out of your pocket?

SB: The short answer is yes.

RM: Did Reid ever try to help out?

SB: He did. In fact, he asked the Nevada Test Site Development Corporation in Las Vegas to provide funds, around \$200,000, to allow Nye County to update the science center's building plans and exhibit master plan. The NTS Development Corporation complied with his request, and the building plans and exhibit master plan were updated in early 2001. We also used some of the money to update the science center's financial feasibility report.

CHAPTER NINE

SB: The Desert Space Station project is on the back burner because of a lack of funds. Today, the cost would probably be around \$40 million. As I said, I file the papers with the IRS every year to maintain the museum's nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation status. I keep the nonprofit alive, just in case. If Nye County or somebody ever wants to run with it, it's there, ready to go.

I forgot to mention the late William H. Williams was also on Nye County science center team. Bill's expertise was in developing fundraising programs. Bill prepared a fundraising program for the science center, and the two of us visited professional fundraisers in Washington, D.C. to see if there was an interest in helping the science center implement its fundraising program. But, the name of the game is you have to have money to make money. And, we did not have money to pay a professional fundraiser. I was finally forced to walk away from the Desert Space Station project in July 2001. At that time I was asked by the Washoe County manager to direct the Washoe County Department of Water Resources. Its director had resigned, and the department had a number of critical issues to address. I took the director position in August 2001.

The Washoe County Department of Water Resources was, and is, a unique government water organization. Its responsibilities include operating a water utility, operating a wastewater utility, operating a reclaimed water utility, developing a regional water plan, developing the Truckee River flood control plan, and developing and implementing the Truckee Meadows groundwater contamination remediation program. The department had around 110 employees when I came on board. That job required me to be in the office by 7:00 in the morning and go home at 7:00 or later at night, and work

on weekends. So I did not have extra time to work on the science center project. I held the job for five years, until the January 2007. I believe the department was able to successfully address the front-burner issues before I left to go back to consulting work.

RM: Any further thoughts on your involvement with the museum?

SB: Well, as I said, I put heart and soul and personal money into it, to try to get it off the ground. I was really enthusiastic about it. A lot of that enthusiasm came from going to the Association of Science and Technology Centers annual conferences, visiting science centers like the Exploratorium, and seeing the excitement, particularly with the youngsters, with hands-on science exhibits. I could see that a science center would be a positive thing in many ways for the state of Nevada, and in particular Nye County.

The train that we were going to ride to make it happen, the federal nuclear waste repository program, did not show up. Nye County did everything possible to position the science center for federal funding if the Yucca Mountain repository project became a reality. And so the Desert Space Station project sits, and is only visible on paper and in our minds.

RM: You have Desert Space Station information in your office, right?

SB: Yes, I have the planning documents, the architectural drawings, the exhibit master plan, the financial feasibility report, and the fundraising report. I also have an exhibit that can be used at shows.

Looking back I guess my work on the science center was truly a labor of love. As I said earlier, my guess is one would need \$40 million to build the science center today. It's my understanding that successful fundraising efforts have to raise big bucks from companies. In return, companies normally ask for naming opportunities. For example, the planetarium that's inside the building could be called the Microsoft Planetarium if

Microsoft would contribute millions of dollars. The IMAX theater might be named the Bob McCracken IMAX Theater if Bob McCracken were to contribute millions of dollars. The Desert Space Station itself could be named, maybe, the General Electric Desert Space Station if General Electric contributed tens of millions of dollars. You get the point. Renewable energy companies should be interested in displaying their products inside and/or outside the science museum, and therefore have their name on science center exhibits.

RM: And they're pushing that now for the area—to plaster the Amargosa Valley with solar energy arrays.

SB: Yes. So maybe some of these solar energy companies might be interested in making a contribution to the science center. Because, you know, when you have a solar energy project, you don't see a lot of people hired to run the facility. Solar energy projects are not labor intensive. To help the local economy, a solar energy company could put money into the science center, a project that would hire people and generate income for the area by way of visitors.

RM: Maybe your science center idea can be brought to fruition.

SB: All it needs is money. Bob, I think we covered just about all my work for Nye County, except for the time I was the interim Nye County manager in 1998.

RM: How long were you the county manager?

SB: In February 1998, the Nye County manager resigned, and Nye County Commissioners Dick Carver and Bob Revert asked me to step in and run the county on an interim basis. I told them I could do it for three months, and I was on the job for eight. We were able to implement a comprehensive and inclusive process to select a permanent county manager.

RM: Was Ron Williams selected?

SB: No, the Nye County commissioners selected Jerry McKnight. Jerry was the budget manager for Washoe County when I was on the Washoe County Board of Commissioners in the mid-'90s. I was really impressed with Jerry when I was a county commissioner. Nye County needed a manager who knew the ins and outs of budgeting, was a good manager of people, and was honest. Jerry most certainly had those qualifications. I wasn't involved in the selection process. The Nye County Commission created three committees to help it weed down the manager applicants to one person. One committee was comprised of Nye County employees. Another committee was comprised of people who had managed cities and counties in Nevada. The third committee was comprised of Nye County citizens. The three committees interviewed the manager finalists—I believe there were three. Jerry McKnight was the top vote-getter from the three committees. The Nye County commissioners concurred with the committees' recommendations and hired Jerry to be the permanent manager.

When I left the interim county manager position in October 1998, my regular trips from Reno to Tonopah came to an end, as well as my many years of living in a motel room in Tonopah.

RM: You've done your time in hell?

SB: I don't believe it was hell, but at times the travel, staying at the Sundowner Motel in Tonopah, the time away from my family, and some of the characters I had to deal with made me question my intelligence.

RM: Did you always have the same room at the Sundowner Motel?

SB: Pretty close to the same room. All of the rooms had a hot stove and refrigerator. I always had my meals in the motel room so I could eat fast and get back to work. Beezie

would prepare my meals for my stay in Tonopah, and all I had to do was apply heat. If I had known I was going to be working in Tonopah a good portion of the period 1983 to 1992, I probably would have rented a place. I did rent an apartment in Tonopah when I was interim county manager.

RM: What stands out in your mind about your time as county manager?

SB: When I was manager Nye County had some employees who needed to go. I had to fire a few employees. I've managed a lot of organizations over the years, and addressing a personnel problem is always the most difficult part of a job. You have to go through the process of documenting everything, and then often you sit down and tell the person he or she gets one more chance, and then if there is no improvement, you fire the person. You have to do it, and in government you have to make sure there is ample documentation for your action.

When I ran the county I changed the budgeting process to make it more transparent and fair. I wanted the county departments to be more active in terms of their involvement in the county budgeting process, and also I wanted them to have the opportunity to appeal a decision the manager made on their budget; hence, a budget appeal process was instituted. It was a process that had not existed before. And the department heads, as I understand it, were quite pleased with their ability to provide more input into the county's annual budget process.

Also, I made an effort to get out and visit as many communities as possible during the period I was the manager. I was fortunate to work for good people on the Nye County Board of Commissioners during the time I was the interim county manager. The commissioners, particularly Bob Revert, Dick Carver, and Bob Davis went out of their way to help me and support me as the county manager. They knew I was putting in long

hours, and I had a plateful of Nye County issues to address. They would ask the tough questions, and at the same time they were supportive and fair.

I was away from my Reno home a lot during the eight months I had the interim county manager position. It was difficult being away from home that much, but at the same time, when you go the extra mile—or in this case 240 miles one way—to do a job, people know it, and they appreciate it. During my eight months as interim county manager I wanted to address glaring personnel problems, make sure Nye County had started to address budgetary problems, improve the county workforce morale, and create a process that would ensure the commissioners selected a highly qualified county manager.

Sometimes when you hire a manager, it's sort of a shoddy process. I wanted this to be more thorough, comprehensive, inclusive and transparent. That's why we had the three committees I mentioned. And it's important to get the public involved, the staff involved, and professional managers involved. We had a commissioner sit in on most of the committee meetings. They couldn't talk. They just watched the process to make sure they were comfortable with the process.

After I left the manager's job the county commissioners asked me to be the county's liaison on Capitol Hill on nuclear waste matters. That involved keeping in touch with key members of Congress and their staffs on the repository program, and also arranging meetings for Nye County commissioners and staff on Capitol Hill.

I did that, and the Nye County commissioners also asked me to continue to run the county's Water Resource Planning Department, the entity created to oppose the Southern Nevada Water Authority water importation project. I might add that in the 1999 Nevada legislative session Nye County, working with Assemblyman Roy Neighbors and

State Senator Dean Rhoads, was able to get a bill passed that provided additional protection for basins that would be the target of an interbasin transfer of water project, like the SNWA water importation project. The bill that passed said the state engineer had to make four additional findings before taking action on an application to transfer groundwater from one basin to another basin.

The four additional findings that were inserted in state water law, and are still in state water law, are: (1) Has the applicant justified the need to import the water from the basin? (2) Does the applicant have a water conservation plan in place, and is it working? (3) Is the proposed action environmentally sound as it relates to the basin of origin? And (4) Will the proposed action unduly limit the economic future of the basin of origin? I was shocked the bill passed. I was so excited about that, I even bought flowers for the bill sponsors. They probably wondered, “What is going on here?” [Laughs] “Why is this guy giving me flowers?” I just couldn’t believe a bill that was so important to protecting rural Nevada, passed.

That bill is another example of Nye County government being proactive on behalf of its citizens and also not watching from the sidelines. Think about it—in 1985, Nye County stood up to the Nevada legislature and Governor Bryan when the county successfully challenged the illegal Pahrump town planning bill in court. In 1987, Nye County stood up to the Nevada legislature and Governor Bryan again when the county successfully challenged the illegal Bullfrog County bill in court. From 1989 to the present, Nye County has stood up to the powers-that-be in Clark County to oppose the Southern Nevada Water Authority water importation project, including developing and supporting the aforementioned bill in the 1999 legislative session. I have to say, Nye County government has never been short on courage.

RM: That's really neat, Steve. It's like something from the frontier. I maintain that central Nevada was the last flowering of the frontier.

SB: Yes, it's an admirable trait. The lawsuits against the Pahrump town planning law and the Bullfrog County law cost Nye County money, probably money it did not have to spare at the time. I say cost Nye County money because the county hired a top-notch attorney to represent it in district court and the Nevada Supreme Court. The Nye County commissioners knew the 1985 and the 1987 bills were an insult to good public policy, as well as being illegal. So whatever it took, the Nye County commissioners were going to do it in order to try to right the ship, so to speak, and they did. The proponents of the special Pahrump town planning law and the Bullfrog County law, including the Nevada legislature and the governor, had significant power and influence, and Nye County stood up to them. Reminds me of the David and Goliath story.

RM: Well, does that about wrap it up?

SB: Yes, I think it does. As I've said earlier, I've been fortunate during my time in Nevada: moving to Nevada in 1969, earning a Master of Science degree at the University of Nevada, Reno; directing the State of Nevada MX Missile Project Department; and helping Nye County in various capacities to address issues of great importance to the County and the state. The icing on the cake was serving on the Washoe County Board of Commissioners. If I were planning a career, I probably could not have asked for a better plan.

RM: What a wonderful thing to say.

SB: In closing, I would like to say I owe a debt of gratitude to a number of Nye County commissioners for allowing me to provide the county assistance since 1983. I feel that I have had a front row seat witnessing and participating in Nevada's history the last

30 years.

RM: Okay. Thank you, Steve, very much for this detailed history. As always, it's been a pleasure working with you.

ADDENDUM

The following is an interview between Robert McCracken and Steve Bradhurst December 4, 1991, at Mr. Bradhurst's office in Tonopah, Nevada, regarding the chapters and contents of a proposed book on the history of the proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Project from the project's beginning in 1983 to the present time—1991—and how the project affected Nevada at all levels of government during that time.

This book was not written. The interview is included here because, although there is overlap with Mr. Bradhurst's more recent interview, the 1991 viewpoint is important in a historical context.

RM: Okay, what is Chapter 1 of our book?

SB: It's an introduction or a preface; it lays out the purpose of the book: "Why is this book being written and what can you expect to find in the subsequent pages?" I'm thinking that in this introductory piece, we have to say that we're writing this book or this book is being written because the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Project is part of Nevada's history. And that if the federal program to build and operate a high level nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain were to disappear tomorrow, the proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Project would still be a significant part of Nevada's history because it's been on the front burner in Nevada since 1983. Nevada has had to deal with the project for nine years at this point.

When you think about it, Nevadans still talk about the effort by the federal government to deploy the massive MX Missile Project in eastern and central Nevada, and that project lasted only three years, from 1979 to 1981. The MX Missile Project made quite an impact on Nevada, and it certainly is part of Nevada's history. Fortunately, the MX Missile Project was terminated by President Reagan, and therefore MX missiles were never deployed by the U.S. Air Force in Nevada. If the president said tomorrow, "It's over; we're going to send this stuff into outer space," the project is still part of

Nevada's history. Most definitely, the project has affected Nevada—certainly in the '80s and the early '90s—so we can't just delete it from the state's history.

And then I think we need some baseline background information. So you have the introductory piece and then you say, "Before we get into it, let's describe the problem." So I think the second chapter should describe the problem. And the problem is the nuclear fuel cycle. You start with production of nuclear fuel, then the use of nuclear fuel, and finally the disposal of the used, or spent, nuclear fuel.

I believe in this section there would be discussion about how technology, sometimes, is ahead of itself—that's the problem with splitting the atom. How do you safely get rid of the product of spitting the atom—lethal nuclear waste? So as you look at that problem and the nuclear waste reprocessing dilemma, you provide useful background information for the book. And we have a lot of information from DOE on how much nuclear waste is out there today that they think needs to be isolated from man, and what they think is going to be out there, just with the existing power plants in the United States, in the next 10, 15, 20 years.

And what we're finding is there is far more nuclear waste than what can be contained in Yucca Mountain. DOE is talking about storing 77,000 metric tons of nuclear waste in Yucca Mountain; in another 20 years, the nation is going to have a lot more than that.

RM: Yes, I read they've been piling on 2,000 tons a year.

SB: I've raised this issue on a number of occasions with DOE, particularly at formal meetings—I have said, "It would be fair to Nevada for you to say for the record that one repository is not enough. In fact, by the year 2020 or whatever, you're going to need a second repository. You need to tell the nation, and you need to tell Congress, that one

repository is not enough, just based on what exists today, not factoring in new nuclear power plants. And you need to tell Nevadans that you're not going to stick the second, the third, and the fourth repositories in Nevada; you're not going to make it a nuclear waste reserve."

Then Nevadans might say, "Well, okay; we're going to make the sacrifice. We don't get any nuclear power, or have electricity-generating nuclear power plants, but as long as only one repository will be located in Nevada then maybe we will support it, given proper safeguards and compensation."

It would be nice if Congress would say, "We know we need a second repository, and the second one is going to be located somewhere else." But that, of course, changed in '87 when Congress eliminated the regional equity provision of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 and said, "For the time being, we're just going to talk about one repository." In the '87 amendment to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, DOE is supposed to report to Congress somewhere around the year 2000 or 2005 on whether or not there's a need for a second repository.

As I said, I've been raising this issue for some time, saying, "Hey, you know today there's a need for more than one nuclear waste repository." Why wait till the year 2005?"

DOE says, "Oh, we don't want to do that."

RM: Well, that's a whole can of worms. If they raise that, then the problem hasn't been solved.

SB: Right. So where are we with the book? You've got the introduction; you've got the problem identified in the second chapter. And then I think Chapter 3 is probably congressional efforts to solve the problem. So that gives us the history of how they've

gone through the years to the key date in 1982 when Congress finally, after a couple of years, came up with a bill, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, that was signed by the president January 7, 1983.

Then you follow the federal nuclear waste repository program from that point on, a program that went from nine sites to five sites to three sites, and the problems associated with how the sites were narrowed to three. And then, of course, in 1987, there is the Amendments Act of 1987; that is, amendments to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 approved in 1987. So Chapter 3 is really a continuation of Chapter 2 but it starts to focus in on the efforts made by the Congress to solve the high level radioactive nuclear waste problem. And, as you know, the Amendments Act of 1987 mandated one site, the Yucca Mountain site.

What's important here is that Congress decided that the disposal of high-level radioactive waste was a federal government responsibility, and the tool for that decision was the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of '82. The private sector was not given the responsibility of storing high level radioactive waste. As you and I discussed earlier, that probably was a mistake.

RM: What do you think private enterprise would have done?

SB: They would have pooled their resources. They would have said, "Okay, Yankee Power, find a place; and Southern Power, you find a place." Or they would have said, "We've got an association here. Let's pool our resources and find a place where all of us can safely store our nuclear waste." My sense is the private sector would have completed the job, and for less money than the amount the federal government has allocated to the task thus far.

RM: And basically they'd have gone in and bought somebody off?

SB: Oh yes, they would have gone into, like, Kansas and said to the state, we have a deal for you.

RM: “We’ll put a billion dollars in here.”

SB: Right. I was hearing that from the American Nuclear Energy Council in ’87. That is, if Nevada was not obstructionist, and followed the law, including still having the right to challenge DOE decisions in court, that they would say, “We’ll help Nevada. We’ll provide some incentives.” So with the private sector you would have had the federal government out of the picture; you wouldn’t have had all these federal employees running around and gumming up the works. You would have had the private sector with their companies out there and they would have gone to the mayors and the county commissioners and the governors and cut a deal.

RM: Were there any initial private enterprise efforts underway before ’82?

SB: I’m not sure. I’d like to think that the private sector was involved, and that they were spending some of their own money looking for a solution.

RM: That would make almost a two-part chapter, part 1 and part 2, if a person could nail down what the private sector did.

SB: Yes, what did they do to try and solve the problem or if they just said, “Uncle Sam, you take care of it.” I think what the private sector is saying is, “We were prepared to take care of the problem but you thought it was too dangerous, Uncle Sam, so we said, ‘Okay, you take care of it.’”

And Uncle Sam said, “Well, if we take care of it we need something in return.” And what they got in return was 1 mill per kilowatt hour to pay for the program. Whoever receives electricity from a utility that produces nuclear power has to pay 1 mill per kilowatt hour on their electric bill, which now generates about \$500 million a year.

The way Uncle Sam sold it to the people in the country was, “We think it’s safer if we have control over nuclear waste but the taxpayer is not going to pay for it, it’s going to be just the people that benefit from nuclear power plants; they’re going to pay for it.”

RM: And that was in the ’82 Act?

SB: Yes. That was how Congress addressed the nuclear waste disposal problem. And when you go back and look at the public record, as far as things that have been said at various congressional hearings, particularly by Congressman Mo Udall, Chairman of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, members of Congress thought they crafted a pretty good bill that provided some regional equity because there would be two repositories, the first one to be located in the West, the second one to be located in the East. You had the people that benefit from nuclear power plants paying for the program. It looked like one area wasn’t going to be stuck or have the burden of storing all of the nation's high-level radioactive waste; there would be two areas, at least.

But Nevadans are saying, “We don’t think that that’s enough. We think that not only should the people who benefit from nuclear power plants pay 1 mill per kilowatt hour, but they should also have to live with the waste. You produce it in your state, you benefit from it, and therefore you live with the nuclear waste that is a product of producing power.”

RM: So now we’re down to Chapter 4.

SB: And when you go through the congressional efforts, then the last subsection of Chapter 3 focuses on Nevada because the Amendments Act in ’87 mandates that all federal work on finding a geologic repository for high-level radioactive waste will concentrate on the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada. That sets the stage for the rest of the book, which is, “Nevada, you’re stuck with this thing.” Or at least for the time being.

I think the objective there would be to have, for example, 20 percent of the book, or no more than 30 percent, the first three chapters, and then the rest of it would be Nevada-specific. The other 70 percent, let's say, would deal with the impact of the federal nuclear waste repository program on Nevada; that is, the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Project. So Chapter 4 would be where you start to talk about how Nevada addressed the project.

RM: You might talk about, first, how the federal government organized their operation in Nevada.

SB: Or maybe something to the extent of Nevada's role in the nuclear world. Because it's not like we're a virgin territory. So set the stage for Nevada—Nevada's certainly been confronted with the nuclear world at least since 1951. Talk a little bit about that, and then you get to when the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of '82 was passed.

Nevada's first official notice from the Department of Energy came in February, I believe, in 1983. (The Department of Energy was authorized by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of '82 to be the federal agency that implemented the repository program.) The Secretary of Energy sent letters to six governors telling them, essentially, "Greetings. We have a site or sites in your state that we think might be suitable for the nation's first high-level radioactive waste repository."

In Nevada we got a letter in February '83. Dick Bryan had just become governor; he had been governor for no more than a month and a half and he got a letter from the Secretary of Energy—I think Hodel at that time—that just said, "We're looking at Yucca Mountain as a possible site for the nation's first geologic repository for high level radioactive waste." The governor of Utah also received a letter.

RM: That was Matheson, right?

SB: Yes, it was Scott Matheson in '83. The DOE letter to him said that "We're looking at two sites in Utah." The governor of Texas got a letter and his letter said DOE was looking at one site in Texas, in Deaf Smith County. In Louisiana, DOE was looking at two sites, and in Mississippi, DOE was looking at one site—or maybe two sites. And in Washington State, DOE was looking at one site. So there were six states, nine sites.

RM: I was wondering if Senator Bennett Johnston put Louisiana on that list just to throw the dogs a bone kind of thing, to keep the wolves off.

SB: I'm not sure. Nevada's complaint, and rightly so, was that it looked like the Nuclear Waste Policy Act said, "DOE, you're supposed to go out and do an objective scientific search and find some sites." But boom, here you have the bill signed by the president January 7, 1983, and a month later DOE has nine sites already. So Nevada is saying, "Where's your site selection program? How did you arrive at nine?" It's obvious that the program had been going on for some time. It is safe to say the federal government was looking at Yucca Mountain for years as well as, I guess, places like the salt domes in Louisiana.

I don't think it was a bone thrown there; I think there was a previous program to look for sites for a repository and DOE took the easy way out and used that information. They said, "Well, we've got this time frame, schedule, that we have to meet with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. God, if we put together an all-encompassing comprehensive evaluation of the United States and tried to find the best sites for a repository, we could be at this for years; so let's just go with what the federal government has already looked at."

So that was a bad start for Nevada. We have DOE saying, "We selected you because we've been looking at you for some time."

And I'm sure that Dick Bryan probably said, "Well, where's your site selection process? How'd you get down to nine sites? The bill was just signed; it's still warm. It was just signed 30 days ago and now you've got nine sites; that doesn't make sense."

RM: I was at the first meeting DOE had in Vegas about Yucca Mountain and Bryan was the first speaker. The second speaker was Hank Greenspun and then Don Vieth gave a talk. I always remember, Bryan's words were, "I'm unalterably opposed to it." That was March, I think; February or March.

SB: Probably March because I think the letter went out in February. My guess is—and this is just speculation and you might be able to get more from people who were on the inside in the Bryan administration. But what I hear is that Governor Bryan was just new to the job. He beat Governor Bob List and Bob List was beat over the head during the period that the state wrestled with the proposed federal MX Missile Project because List tried to be, I think, somewhat objective. Governor List had said, "Well, let's look at the positive and negative aspects of the MX missile project." The press said he was wishy-washy—one day he's for it, one day he's against it—whereas List, I think, was trying to look at the bright side and the negative side of the project," and the press said, "Well, you must be for it."

And Governor Bryan used that perception against List in the 1982 gubernatorial election, I think. Although the MX Project was gone by the time the two ran against each other, the history was there; people had in their minds what they read in the paper over the three-year period that List was back and forth on the issue of the MX missile project. And I think the great majority of the people in Nevada, north and south, were opposed to the proposed MX Missile Project, except for the unions down south and some elected officials in Clark County.

So I think what happened was that when Governor Bryan realized that Yucca Mountain was going to be considered by the federal government, he sat down with his people, probably his political advisors, and said, “What do I do? What lessons did we learn from the way Bob List addressed the MX Missile Project?”

The word I got is that Governor Bryan's people said, “Look, if you try to take the middle road you're going to get beat to death, just like Bob List. You've got to be either for it or against it, and certainly you don't want to be for nuclear waste coming to Nevada. So take the no position and hold tight to it.” I think they learned a valuable lesson from what happened to Bob List. He was really raked over the coals because he looked like he was back and forth on the MX Missile Project.

RM: Suppose Bryan had chosen to take the other position? How do you think the history of the thing would have worked out?

SB: I don't know. I don't think it made much difference early on because the first year or two, there wasn't much damage that was done to the DOE program by the state. It wasn't until the last couple of years where the state went to court and really started to, I think, slow things down.

RM: But I think support-wise, they did a lot of damage early on.

SB: Right. If he had taken a neutral position or a positive position early on, there wouldn't be that negative taste that most people have in their mouths about a nuclear waste repository in Nevada.

RM: And would Nevada be sitting on some big plums now? Big projects—the supercollider or things like that?

SB: It's possible. In the amendments act, in 1987, Senator Bennett Johnston proposed in his legislation \$100 million a year for the state having the first repository during the

operation phase of the program, which is about 25 years. So that'd be \$2.5 billion. And then he had something like \$50 million a year that would be given to the state having the first repository during the construction period. So Nevada stood to make some big bucks.

I think the governor's position was if the project is going to hurt the state and its people, then we can't be bought off. But I don't think the people in the state ever really were informed that there were some safeguards in the program. I think the story that was told to the people in the state is if Nevada doesn't stop this, we're going to have nuclear waste strewn all over the place.

RM: It'll be in your neighborhood. [Laughs]

SB: Right; they're just going to drop a can off here and there. If you wake up in the morning and a can of nuclear waste rolled into your yard, just don't hug it. [Laughter] And I think the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has done a real poor job of letting the people of Nevada know their role in the federal repository program. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is a safeguard. Based on my experience, I think the NRC is the safety net for this program and that the scientists that work for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission are not politicians.

RM: I don't think the average Nevadan knows what the NRC is or has even heard of it.

SB: Right. And they don't know that the NRC has to give DOE a license to construct a repository as well as a license to operate one. They're not going to get a license to construct the repository unless the NRC says that the site is safe.

RM: So there's a section of a chapter on the failure of the NRC to communicate about its role and responsibility.

SB: I think that information is important.

RM: I see it as a sub-chapter, maybe; a big section.

SB: Or maybe a chapter should be on implementation of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, as amended in 1987. Implementation of the Act was to be done by DOE, NRC, and EPA. EPA has a role that's written into the Act; NRC has a big role that's written into the Act; and of course, DOE is the agency that's supposed to get this thing built.

When you talk about the NRC role, one can point out that it doesn't happen if the NRC doesn't give you a permit. That's not to say that Congress couldn't change the law but I can't see Congress being that raw politically and saying, "Hey, we're afraid that NRC's going to find this site to be a bad place to put nuclear waste so we're going to take the NRC out of the picture." They did that with the low level nuclear waste repository site in Carlsbad, New Mexico. Actually, they didn't take it out; they never put NRC in. They're just going to go ahead and build it; the NRC's not involved whatsoever. That site is called the Waste Isolation Pilot Project, or WIPP.

There's a big difference between the WIPP site and the repository, and that is the NRC. I just think the NRC scientists are professional and not subject to political pressure. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is a five-member commission; they're political appointees so they might feel completely different than their staff. Their staff might make recommendations saying, "Don't give DOE a permit to construct because this is a God-awful place."

And the NRC commissioners could say, "Well, thank you very much. Those of you who wrote that scathing recommendation, take a vacation. We don't want to see you for six months."

RM: And they would go ahead and permit it?

SB: Yes, that's possible. But that's public information. I don't think the people in this country would ever swallow knowing that this political board went ahead and approved a repository in light of a negative recommendation.

So I think that's an important chapter—the implementation of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of '82 as amended in '87. You go through the history of the Act and then you talk about the implementation and then the book focuses on Nevada. Regarding implementation, the big actors at the federal level would be DOE, the principal actor, mover, and shaker of the program, because DOE has to actually find a site and build it and operate it and close it. But DOE can't do that without NRC permission.

And then, EPA is supposed to set up health guidelines that would help DOE determine whether or not a site is safe. That is, EPA is supposed to say something about how much radiation can be emitted over a period of time; how far can the stuff move in the ground over 10,000 years.

RM: Are they doing that?

SB: They are. They did it and then there was a challenge to the EPA regulations so they're reworking the proposed regulations.

RM: You don't hear much about them.

SB: No, you don't. So EPA has actually set out the health standards that DOE has to adhere to when they find a site. If EPA says radionuclides can only move 15 feet in 100 years, then DOE has to find host material that, if the canister breaks, would keep the stuff from flowing no more than 15 feet in 100 years. EPA is an important actor but the most important, really, is NRC. NRC is the safety net and they expect it'll take at least three years of NRC hearings to process the application to construct. Nevada, Nye County, or any interested party can be a party to the NRC hearings.

RM: Meaning what? They can testify, you mean?

SB: Nevada, Nye County, etc., can testify; they can sit there at the table. They would have attorneys at the table; they can raise issues and concerns and so forth. They say it's an open process, and that people just have to have faith in the process. That's hard to do when you figure it's a government process. But in my experience over the last eight years I'm not frightened the way the average guy on the street in Nevada is frightened because I have some faith in NRC. I don't like the fact it's being shoved down our throat, but at least Congress—Mo Udall and others—had the vision to put in some sort of a process that didn't allow DOE just to say, "Okay, we're going to stick it there, and we don't care what you have to say."

That's where I come back to the politics of it. I don't think you will probably ever come across any statement by a state official about the importance of NRC. Because if they're doing it for political gain, they don't want the people in the state to know that there's some other entity out there besides the state that's going to protect Nevadans from an unsafe repository.

If people were comfortable with the NRC, then the state's position might broaden to the equity issue; that is, why shouldn't other states have a repository, too?

RM: But how can the average Nevadan be assured that the NRC would do its job?

SB: As I say, you can't. NRC, I guess, has been gun-shy because over the years the NRC has been considered public enemy No. 1 in a lot of the communities where they've had nuclear power plants. The people in those communities have felt that the NRC bent over backwards to work with the nuclear industry. They're so used to being beat over the head that they figure, "We're getting this program, Congress put us into it, but we're not going to show any kind of a profile. We're going to do our job but we're sure not going

to go out there and let people know because we don't want to get beat over the head." So they've kept, I think intentionally, a low profile. It's rare to even hear about them.

I think if I were the President of the United States, I'd say, "I think that it's time that the people of Nevada understand your role, NRC. I want you, the NRC, to go out and have some public hearings and talk to people in Nevada; let them know what your role is. You don't have to sell it, just tell them what you will do to protect the people. Apparently, they don't know what you're up to. I want them to know you're involved, and what you're doing, and I want them to meet your scientists. I want them to get some sense of where you're coming from."

RM: That's a good idea. That's a way of helping the DOE sell this thing. So you've got it up to Chapter 5, really. We've got the implementation of the Act, then got Nevada's role in the nuclear world.

SB: Right. Chapter 6 would be how Nevada governments have reacted to the DOE Yucca Mountain repository project. In saying "governments," we're talking about the state, the legislature, and local governments. Now we're finally getting into the impact on the state—what did Nevada governments do early on?

I came before the Nye County Board of County Commissioners July 19, 1983, and offered my services, saying, "Here's what I've done. It looks to me like Yucca Mountain is one of the proposed nuclear waste repository sites. There'll be some federal funds available for you to be involved in the program, and I'm here offering my services."

Soon after I talked to them, the commissioners said, "Sure, we'd like to have you." The commissioners asked me to develop and direct the Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Program.

Prior to talking to the Nye County commissioners I tried to get background information on the proposed federal nuclear waste repository program. I talked to people in state government. At the time, the state did not have the Nuclear Waste Project Office. The governor decided to have the Nevada State Department of Energy address the proposed DOE Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository. Bob Loux was working for the Nevada State Department of Energy. Bob was involved in various energy programs like insulation of homes, geothermal energy, etc.; he was not a nuclear guy. But he got lucky or unlucky; it depends on who you talk to—I guess for Bob, it's probably unlucky—and it sort of fell in his lap. But he wasn't the main person; the director of the Nevada State Department of Energy was the guy who was in charge of the Nevada effort to address the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, and Bob was assigned to help with that effort.

I talked to the governor's chief of staff, Andy Grose, who was a friend, to get some information as to what the state was up to relative to its efforts to address the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository project. Andy said, "Steve, why don't you put together a white paper for the state to give us the benefit of your experience with the state effort to address the MX Missile Project, and tell us, the governor's office, how you think the state of Nevada ought to address the repository issue?"

So I did and I indicated that I thought they ought to do what the state did to address the federal government MX Missile Project. With the MX Missile Project, initially the state had some folks come in who were consultants and they worked as a team, with a director, who reported to the governor. I said, "Do the same thing with the proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Project. Just put together a team and have them work directly for the governor. And then in the next session (they were in

the middle of the '83 session, so it would have been the '85 session), have this group become a state department so they're on equal footing with all the other state agencies.

And that's exactly what happened. Bob Loux was put in charge of a unit that would work directly for the governor. In practice, the unit worked directly with the governor's office on a day-to-day basis. That would have been about the summer or the fall of '83. And then in '85, the Nevada legislature created the Nevada State Nuclear Waste Project Office, with a cabinet-level position for the director.

So the state program to address the proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Project started out as a one-man operation—Bob Loux. Then Bob brought in a few people, a secretary and Carl Johnson, just three of them; Carl Johnson was a technical-type guy with expertise in geology/hydrology. In '84, Bob brought on board Joe Strolin, a person with multiple skills, including familiarity with socioeconomic issues and impacts. Bob gradually started to increase his operation. Then, as I say, in '85, his unit became a state agency and they were off and running.

The counties were not written into the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of '82. There was no mention whatsoever of the counties' right to conduct impact assessment, or conduct oversight-type activity. Therefore, the counties that felt they would be directly impacted by the proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Project had to go to the state with hat in hand saying, "We'd like to have some of the repository planning money that you receive from the federal government to conduct oversight activities and planning activities. We'd like to have some of that funnel on to the counties because, gee, when the dust settles on the repository project we may have to live with this thing, and the state will go on to something else."

RM: What was their reaction when you asked them for that?

SB: It was positive. I've never been negative or said anything negative about the state operation. The state didn't give us everything we wanted by way of funding. We had to jump through the state's hoops. So local governments were beholden to the state in order to be involved in the federal Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Project.

RM: What were some of the hoops like?

SB: We had state reporting requirements, and the local governments had to work with the state a little closer than we are right now because the state controlled the money. If the state said, "We're going to have a meeting next week," you're likely to show up.

[Laughter] But as I say, my hat's off to Bob Loux, Joe Strolin, and Carl Johnson because they bent over backwards to help us.

When amendments to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 were being kicked around on Capitol Hill in 1987, Nye County did not plug the state into its Capitol Hill activities. We thought it was best that we just went back there and talked to the powers that be on Capitol Hill and say, "Look, things are going well with Dick Bryan as governor. We're getting some funds but some day we may wake up and Dick Bryan may say, 'I don't like the way Nye County's acting' and not allow any of the federal money going to the state to be involved in the federal repository program to be allocated to Nye County

I went to Don Vieth, DOE's repository person in Nevada early on, when I got involved. I told Don, "I think you have the latitude and flexibility to provide us money directly."

He said, "It's not our preference. We don't want to deal with all these local governments; it's too much of a hassle and a headache and so forth. If you want to get involved in this program and you want some of the federal money that's appropriated for

the repository program, then you'll have to go to the state and the state will have to set up some sort of a subcontract with Nye County. The state has a grant from the DOE and the state will have to go ahead and set up some grants or contracts with the local governments."

So we couldn't get anywhere with DOE. Don Vieth could have treated us separately, and I tried to point that out to him, and he gave me a pretty flimsy excuse—there was no reason why they couldn't deal with us as well as the state at the same time.

Clark County was interested in being involved in assessing the impacts of the proposed repository on Clark County, and that helped considerably. If it would have been just Nye County, maybe the state would not have been so cooperative. But when Clark County said they wanted to be involved in the repository program, there was no way the governor of this state was going to tell Clark County, "I'm sorry, we're not going to pass any money on to you so you can get involved in this program." We probably rode Clark County's coattails.

RM: Do you think Vieth from his perspective at that time was probably wise in turning you down? Because it just would have compounded the entities that he had to deal with and potentially the problems.

SB: From his perspective, yes, he probably thought it would be too much of a hassle. But as it turns out, all he did is spur Nye County on to make sure that when Congress amended the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, that Nye County took care of itself.

RM: Do you see being spurred like that leading to those almost Herculean heights of getting Nye County written into the 1987 legislation?

SB: Oh, yes.

RM: I mean, it's not the kind of thing that Vieth would have been able to predict that local people would have done.

SB: He didn't know about it, the state didn't know about it. Other local governments in Nevada did not know about it. Nye County just went back there and talked to the right people. Some of the folks on Capitol Hill were getting, at that time, negative reading from all six states that were the target areas for the first repository. Then in 1987, they had narrowed it down to three states—Washington, Texas, and Nevada. The people on Capitol Hill were getting a lot of flack, and our timing was perfect because I think some of the folks that wanted to get this program going on Capitol Hill thought, "Well, gee, here are local governments. We haven't seen them or heard from them. Maybe we can use them as a sort of cushion between the states that are fighting us tooth and nail and Congress. Local governments might be receptive to whatever we're selling." I think that they probably had that in mind, and we weren't going to discourage them. Nye County wanted to provide input to the proposed amendments to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982.

Our primary objective was just to get written into the law. We submitted 18 amendments to Udall's people as well as to Bennett Johnston's people, and 14 of them were integrated into the amended act; it was just amazing.

RM: Would it be possible to get a copy of those?

SB: Yes, I've got them. In fact, I have the memo that I sent the commissioners that outlines the whole nine yards.

RM: And what was the essence of those amendments?

SB: Essentially the essence was, wherever you see a reference to "state and affected Indian tribe" in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, the new language should read,

“state, affected Indian tribe, and affected unit of local government.”” When we first proposed amendments to the Act in the spring of 1987, we defined the affected unit of local government as the situs county; that is, the county that contains the proposed repository and therefore Nye County. Only the situs county would be the affected unit of local government.

But in June 1987, the Nevada legislature passed a law creating Bullfrog County out of the middle of Nye County. Bullfrog County contained the proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Site. The purpose of Bullfrog County—a county with no people and no private land—was to allow the governor to appoint three people to the Bullfrog County Board of Commissioners (two people from Clark County and one person from Washoe County) who would divert any federal funds that came to the repository's situs county (i.e., Bullfrog County) to Clark County. The Bullfrog County bill was an example of raw political power and greed. Governor Bryan signed the Bullfrog County bill, and Bullfrog County was in existence from June 1987 to early 1988. Fortunately, Nye County challenged the legislation that created Bullfrog County, and a Nevada district court ruled the legislation was unconstitutional in early 1988.

After Bullfrog County was created in late June 1987, I got on the phone with folks in local governments in Texas and Washington State that represented situs local governments in the federal nuclear waste repository program—Deaf Smith County, Texas, and Benton County, Washington. I said, “Fellows, Bullfrog County is now law. The governor signed a law creating Bullfrog County out of Nye County and Bullfrog County contains the proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Site.” The amendments act had not been approved at that time. I said, “Nye County needs to go to Capitol Hill to see if the proposed definition for “affected unit of local government” can

be changed to say the situs county and any county adjacent to the situs county, if the Secretary of Energy decides to classify a county adjacent to the situs county as an affected unit of local government.”

The proposed definition would mean Bullfrog County would be an affected unit of local government and since it was surrounded by Nye County, Nye County would be an affected unit of local government, if so designated by the Secretary of Energy. The proposed definition meant Clark County could not be an affected unit of local government since it was no longer adjacent to the situs county (Bullfrog County).

I asked my counterparts in Texas and Washington, “Do you have any problems with the proposed new definition of affected unit of local government?” They said no. So Andrea Dravo, Nye County's representative on Capitol Hill, went ahead and rewrote the definition so it could be considered by key staffers and members of Congress. She gave the new definition to Senator Bennett Johnston’s staff and two weeks later I received a draft of the amendments bill and the new definition was in there. The draft was faxed to my office in Tonopah.

I remember I was reading the draft as I walked across the parking lot from my office to a meeting at the nearby courthouse, not thinking that the proposed definition would be in the draft. In fact, I thought it would take a while to work it in the proposed legislation. When I saw the new definition in the draft bill I couldn’t believe it. The definition of affected unit of local government included not only the situs county but any adjacent county if the Secretary of Energy decided to make that designation. Nye County was at the right place at the right time with the right support team, as well as having involved and supportive county commissioners like Bob Revert and Joe Garcia.

RM: How did you get Andrea Dravo to work for you?

SB: She left the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee in, I think, '83, and she was out on her own. I was looking for somebody to help us on Capitol Hill. When I went back in February/March of 1987, I went to the key congressional offices. I went to the National Governor's Association and talked to a guy named Holmes Brown, who was involved in the WIPP program. I always asked the question—"If Nye County needs somebody to be its eyes and ears on Capitol Hill who would you recommend for that position?" Andrea's name came up, and I contacted her, and she said she'd be happy to help.

Andrea was the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee staffer who worked directly with the Committee chairman, Mo Udall, to flesh out the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982. She had the responsibility of working with her counterpart in the Senate to make sure the legislation was acceptable to both houses of Congress. Andrea is tough as nails. And as I say, she left and went out into the private sector in 1983. She did not want to testify at committee hearings for Nye County; she didn't want to go back and work her old boss over. But she knew how to get things done. I asked Andrea to talk to key staffers about Nye County and provide them communications from Nye County.

RM: So you made these suggestions to her and she was the one who got them implemented?

SB: We told her what we wanted and she went ahead and sent that information over to the key staff people and they put it in the proposed amendments act.

RM: Do you know who those key staff people were?

SB: At the top of list would be Ben Cooper and Mary Louis Wagner. They worked for Bennett Johnston's Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee.

RM: And Andrea's strength with them was such that they would just put in there what she suggested?

SB: I believe Ben Cooper and Mary Louise felt Nye County was treated poorly by the Nevada legislature and Governor Bryan when they created Bullfrog County. Also, I feel they wanted to accommodate local government as much as possible. There is no question that Ben, Mary Louise, and other staffers wanted the repository program to go forward, and they were having trouble with the three finalist states at that time, and they thought maybe, "We could make some progress with the local governments that might be the site of the nation's first geologic repository for high-level radioactive waste."

RM: And that became very important; it set the stage for your dealings with congressional staffers focused on building a nuclear waste repository, didn't it?

SB: Yes. Of course, if I could turn back the clock to July 1987, when I was on the phone with my counterparts in Texas and Washington, I'm sure now I would not have made the recommendation that we change the definition of affected unit of local government because as it turned out, Bullfrog County was eliminated, as I said, in early 1988. In July 1987, the proposed definition meant only Nye County would be adjacent to the situs county (Bullfrog County). But when the court eliminated Bullfrog County that meant Nye County was back to being the situs county, and of course all of the counties adjacent to Nye County could petition the Secretary of Energy for "affected unit of local government" status. They did that; that is Clark, Lincoln, White Pine, Eureka, Lander, Churchill, Mineral, Esmeralda, and Inyo Counties were designated "affected units of local government." So, now Nye County has competition for federal funds appropriated every year by Congress to the affected units of local government.

RM: So Bullfrog County triggered that change. Then when you got rid of Bullfrog County you were stuck with the wording and you'd be better off without it.

SB: Yes, because there are nine counties that are adjacent to Nye County and all nine of them are affected units of local government now. So we have ten counties, including Nye County, all competing for limited federal funds.

RM: But to return to Andrea, your contact with her was very important.

SB: Oh yes, Andrea was a key person. As I say, she talked to key staff people on the Senate side. I believe these people worked with Andrea for years when they developed the Nuclear Waste Policy Act back in the early 1980s.

She left us about September/October of 1987 to go to law school, and then we picked up Elgie Holstein, who had also been involved in the repository program, to some extent.

RM: And what capacity was he in?

SB: He was a consultant and had worked for the National Conference of State Legislators. Elgie had been a senior staff person with the NCSL. He had some knowledge of the repository program, and he knew how things work on Capitol Hill. The lesson I learned directing the Nevada MX Missile Program Department was that you're dead here in Nevada unless you have someone in Washington, DC, who is respected by senior congressional staffers, and who can find out what's going on and can talk for you and listen. I think Nye County's been light years ahead of the states and local governments involved with the federal repository program since it hired Andrea Dravo in 1987 and later hired Elgie Holstein. Starting in 1987, Nye County knew what was going on relative to the repository program even before Nevada's congressional delegation did.

RM: Is that right? So again, it's more effective playing the political game on the Beltway.

SB: That's right. Whatever successes we've had have been because of the right people in Washington, DC. And also because, as I say, key staffers on Capitol Hill were looking for friends. I don't think when I walked in and talked to Paul Gilman in Senator Domenici's office or Ben Cooper in Senator Bennett Johnston's office or others that their only thought was, "Oh, gee, these poor people. This poor county is out in left field." I think they looked at us as an opportunity to possibly soften the opposition in the state.

RM: When you used to go back there to make your case with them, what is the difference between you doing that and someone like Dravo doing it? How do they look at you in Washington?

SB: Well, I think they're sympathetic with me because I'm close to the board of commissioners and I live in Nevada. What I've tried to do over the years is make the initial contact with key congressional staffers so that we're on a first-name basis. Then I tell them who's doing some work for us on Capitol Hill. I always try and get a sense of whether or not they think highly of the person that we have as our representative on Capitol Hill. If they don't, then I'll have to deal with the congressional office directly. But if they have respect for whoever's working for us, then they know that person speaks for me. Nye County was fortunate to have Andrea and then Elgie representing it on Capitol Hill.

What I've also tried to do over the years is bring the commissioners into the act. Twice a year or whatever I have the staff people on these various committees and senators and congressmen not only see me but see the county commissioners. The county commissioners, of course, live in rural Nevada and they're sort of in awe of what they see

and hear on Capitol Hill. That makes a positive impression on the staff people, to know that these people are the real people. They see the county commissioners, and I think they have great respect for them. They see me and probably think, “Well, here’s Nye County’s hired gun, but he’s from Nevada.” In my mind the best-case scenario is to have a county commissioner talk to folks on Capitol Hill about Nye County's issues, concerns, and needs.

I think trust is built up over time. We’ve learned that you just never bypass a key staffer and go above that person. You never turn them around. If you work with them, you provide them accurate information and they can trust you, they may not go with you in terms of your recommendations, but at least they won’t hurt you.

RM: How do you get to the committee? For instance, if you know that Bennett Johnston is head of the committee—you can’t go and knock on Bennett Johnston’s door, can you?

SB: You determine the committee members and the staff people on the committee handling your issue, because the committee has so many issues. Early on I just went to some meetings, and I heard these key committee staff people give presentations; you could see who was working the nuclear waste repository issue. I just identified the key staff people on the congressional committees responsible for some aspect of the federal nuclear waste repository program, and then I made appointments with them.

RM: Do you find that they’re receptive to you or are they just flagging you through?

SB: Early on, as I said, they were very receptive because they never heard from Nye County, or, for that matter, local governments. I think they were thinking they could get something in return so they bent over backwards to work with us, to help us. Now we have a little more professional relationship because I don’t see them as often. There

aren't big issues that we're dealing with now, and the act is not being amended. So we just try to keep them informed. I ask Elgie to take key congressional staffers to lunch about every six months for an hour and a half, two hours, just to bring them up to date on Nye County issues, concerns and activities.

RM: Are those power centers in Washington relatively stable? There's not a lot of turnover?

SB: Not a lot of turnover with the staff people that work for the chairmen of congressional committees—that's the height of their professional program. They want to be a staff person to a committee chairman because that's top of the line. Well, chief of staff is top of the line, but after that if you're a key staff person on whatever the issue is, you're a very important person.

You go to the committee meetings and you'll see the staff person sitting right behind the chairman. And the chairman is normally talking to the staff person during a meeting. The staff person's right by the table. There isn't much movement once you become a staff person; the only movement would occur if your boss is defeated or is out of power.

RM: So we've got our sixth chapter, reaction of Nevada governments.

SB: I'd say the next chapter would be probably intergovernmental relations—how did the various levels of government react with each other in addressing the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository Project? Or let's say the previous chapter would be what programs the governments set up and what positions they took and what they did with DOE. So that would be Chapter 6, I guess. So Chapter 7 would be intergovernmental relations—how the Nevada governments dealt with each other and also with Congress and the federal government relative to the repository program. I would say

intergovernmental relations would be not only government-to-government in Nevada but also Nevada governments—whether it be the legislature, the state, and local government—with the US Congress and also with federal agencies like NRC, DOE, EPA.

GAO is very important because GAO is the congressional watchdog on how money is spent. The last thing that DOE wants is a bad GAO report. GAO has to prepare a report, I think every six months, to Senator Bennett Johnston, as Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee, on how the money is being spent, and if it's being wasted.

RM: Do they really watch? There's so much going on. . .

SB: Yes, GAO is independent as all get out. So the GAO is monitoring this program from a fiscal aspect, whereas the NRC, of course, has the responsibility to say yes or no on actually building this thing. GAO is reporting to the world as to whether or not the DOE is wasting the money and whether or not they're following the law and whether or not they have a program that's realistic that will accomplish the objectives of the law.

Chapter 7 is important. I think there's a lot to be learned about how these entities deal with each other.

RM: What would you see as key entities in this chapter?

SB: I think early on, for example, the way the state worked with the affected units' local governments. The state took the local governments under its wing. The state, in '83, '84, '85 could have ignored us so I think that that was a positive move on the part of the state, to involve local governments. As I say, I don't know if it was out of the kindness of the state's heart or that an 800-pound gorilla—Clark County—was one of the local governments. If the repository was up in Elko County and Clark County wasn't involved,

I don't know if the state would have involved the counties and the city. Anyway, the state involved local governments, and it is a fine example of intergovernmental relations.

Certainly one would have to take a look at what the state legislature did. There was definitely conflict between some state legislators and the governor's office. The state legislature decided, I believe, in '85, to not only create the state nuclear waste project office, at the governor's request, but they also created the Nevada Commission on Nuclear Projects. I believe the commission was created to take control of the state nuclear waste project office, and therefore reduce the governor's influence on the office. The commission was supposed to set policy for the state nuclear waste project office—essentially tell the state nuclear waste project office what to do. I believe some members of the legislature were trying to separate the governor from the nuclear waste project office. This never did happen. The commission exists, but the governor was smart enough to make sure that he had his people on the commission—Grant Sawyer has been chairman since Day 1, he and other members of the Commission have been very supportive of the governor's position on the proposed nuclear waste repository.

RM: Why did they want to take the governor out of it?

SB: There were people in the legislature that felt, I think, that maybe the state's hard-line position wasn't the right way to go and that there ought to be some contingency planning and maybe the state ought to be working a little bit closer with DOE and the nuclear industry. They didn't like the fact that the nuclear waste project office was anti-repository.

RM: Do you have any names there?

SB: State Senator Tom Hickey. Tom would be a good person for you to talk to; he was the father of Bullfrog County. He probably would spend some time with you. Tom was one of the leaders in creating the commission and creating Bullfrog County.

RM: And that's called the commission on nuclear. . . ?

SB: Projects. So within the legislature you have that kind of activity and then of course the legislature, at the same time, is saying to the local governments, "You are an instrument of state law, and you have to fall in line behind the state. We don't want you out there wheeling and dealing on your own with DOE and Congress. All the local governments in this state have to fall in line under the direction of the governor."

And the local governments said, "That sounds good but we're not going to do that. We're not going to be asking the governor or Bob Loux or State Senator Tom Hickey or anyone else what we should be doing. We're going to work with the governor, Bob Loux and the legislature, but we're not going to ask them for permission to go and talk to people on Capitol Hill."

That's what it came down to when we went back in '87 and testified. Senator Bennett Johnston invited Nye County to testify on the amendments act, on a particular bill. That, I understand, really irritated State Senator Tom Hickey and State Senator Ken Redelsperger. Senator Redelsperger represented Nye County and other rural counties in the legislature. Redelsperger and Hickey said, "The Nye County commissioners shouldn't be talking for Nye County; a state legislator should be talking for Nye County." And Redelsperger said it should be him.

Our response was, "Wait a minute. He represents many, many counties. The elected officials that are close to the people, as close as you can get to the people, are the county commissioners." These legislators want local government to be seen but not

heard. So that was interesting—members of the state legislature telling local governments to not communicate with Congress. In Nevada we do not have home rule, and I guess these legislators thought they could tell county commissioners what to do.

RM: What is home rule?

SB: Home rule means that local governments have significant responsibilities that they can perform without having to get permission from the state legislature. In this state every two years when the legislature meets the legislators get involved in just about every function of local government, and they shouldn't, in my mind.

So the legislature was saying, "Since we don't have home rule, you're out there because of the grace of the legislature. We can get rid of you if we want to. Or we can at least get rid of part of your county and stick it in another county; we can punish you. Or tell you what—we can create another county inside your county if we want to," and that's exactly what the legislature and the governor did to Nye County.

RM: Who were some of the other key figures in the legislature?

SB: The reason State Senator Tom Hickey was a key person in the legislature is because he was chairman of the committee created by the legislature to perform oversight of the federal, state, and local government nuclear waste repository programs. The legislative committee has a membership of three senators and four assemblymen and the committee has a professional staff person. So the legislature has its own independent repository program, independent of the state program, but it was supposed be coordinated with the state program. Assemblyman Paul May was another key figure in the legislature, particularly since he championed the Bullfrog County bill in the Assembly.

RM: How did Senator Hickey and his legislative committee on nuclear waste get along with the state nuclear waste project office?

SB: To this day, they don't get along.

RM: You never hear of the state legislature committee; what do they do?

SB: They used to meet quite a bit on a regular basis to get input from DOE, NRC, EPA, Bob Loux's office, the private sector, and local governments. But they haven't been too active of late. Also, the Committee would go on trips—to the Waste Isolation Pilot Project in Carlsbad, New Mexico, back to Washington, DC, and even overseas. Their job was to get as informed as possible on the repository program and report to the other legislators.

RM: Were there too many hands in the soup, or giving mixed signals to Washington?

SB: I think there were. I think the state legislative committee on nuclear waste was trying to be more objective. The state was saying, "No, no, no, no," and the legislative committee was saying, "We'll talk to you DOE. We'll hear you out." That irritated the governor's office, and it irritated the state nuclear waste project office people. I don't think the relationship has ever been good between the state nuclear waste project office and the legislative committee. I think the governor's nuclear waste project office views the legislative committee as a committee that's working counter to their program.

RM: Does the committee have a staff?

SB: Yes, as indicated, the committee has a staff of one person. Early on, it was the deputy director of the Research Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Fred Weldon. Then about five years ago, a good friend of mine, Don Bayer, was hired to be the staff person to that committee. Don's job is just to stay on top of the program and go to repository meetings and coordinate the trips of the committee and their meetings.

But you see, this committee is funded by the state. The state receives an annual appropriation from Congress to be involved in the federal repository program (just like

the affected units of local government), and the state is supposed to pass some of the money it receives on to the legislative committee to fund the committee's operation. The state has not been passing much money on to the committee. Which, to me, is a sign of significant intestinal fortitude on the part of the state nuclear waste project office. I say that because every two years, the state nuclear waste repository project office has to go before the state legislature to get its budget approved, and some members of the legislature are not happy with the office. To this day, I understand that the relationship between the office and the legislative committee is not good.

RM: It sounds like they don't have the horsepower to do much of anything.

SB: No. The committee would if it had key people on the committee. But the key people—that is, the speaker of the assembly and the majority leader of the senate—are not on the committee and they don't necessarily agree with what the committee's doing. So the committee chairman and members cannot get a sympathetic ear in their own body. If they could get a sympathetic ear from the leadership on the assembly side and on the senate side, then they'd get whatever they wanted. But the governor's always been close to the leadership of the two bodies, the senate and the assembly. He's never had a problem because the legislative committee can scream and yell but they can't get anything from the leadership because the leadership's working with the governor.

RM: How are the various delegations in the legislature—say Clark County versus the representative from Nye and so on—broken down in terms of what's happened?

SB: The assemblypersons who have represented Nye since 1983 have been Ken Redelsperger in the '83 sessions and Galyn Spriggs in the '85, '87, '89, and '91 sessions. In the senate Nye County was represented by Rick Blakemore in the '83 session, Ken Redelsperger in the '85, '87, and '89 sessions, and Virgil Getto in the '91 session. I

believe the Nye County representatives in the legislature have tried to take Nye County's position on the repository project; that is, be pragmatic and professional. Nye County knows when the dust settles on the federal program to find a location for the nation's first nuclear waste repository that the county may have the site, and therefore it will have to deal with the repository up close and for a long time. Nye County did not ask for the repository, but feels it can best serve its citizens if it prepares for it.

Whereas as you get further away from Yucca Mountain and Nye County you see some elected officials at the state and local government levels become emotional about the possibility of a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain. The bottom line is, some elected officials in Nevada appear to use the repository project for political purposes.

RM: Has Clark County been a more serious offender in that regard?

SB: No, I don't think so. Although, it is interesting to note that the Clark County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution saying they're opposed to the repository, and when there was talk of bringing low-level radioactive waste to the low-level radioactive waste storage site near Beatty, a couple of the Clark County commissioners threatened to throw themselves in front of the railroad that would transport that waste. So some Clark County officials have even made the transportation of low-level radioactive waste through Clark County an emotional issue.

But it's interesting—for the high-level waste, they passed resolutions opposing a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, but they aren't really out in front like the governor with their opposition. Clark County government appears anxious to get as much federal money as possible from the federal repository program, particularly for repository planning and benefits. Remember, Clark County legislators led the charge to create

Bullfrog County so any federal money going to the situs county for hosting the repository (i.e., Bullfrog County) could be diverted to Clark County.

It's unfortunate that there isn't one person on the Nevada Commission on Nuclear Projects from Nye County, and most of the members of the seven-member commission live in Clark County.

RM: How have the public and the media responded throughout all of this? Have there been any shifts in opinion?

SB: I think the media has shifted, particularly in the last year, maybe the last couple of years. The biggest newspaper in the state, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, seems to be accepting the repository, saying it looks like it's a foregone conclusion and therefore we need to work with DOE and try to get the best deal possible from Congress. The *Las Vegas Sun* newspaper is opposed to a nuclear waste repository in Nevada. I think the papers probably throughout the state are opposed to a nuclear waste repository in Nevada.

With the public, I don't believe there's really ever been a good poll taken. Every so often a survey shows that the majority of people in Nevada are opposed to a nuclear waste repository in Nevada, but I think it's the way the survey questions are framed that produce an overwhelming percentage of people opposed to it. It would be nice to have an independent party pay for a survey of public opinion on a nuclear waste repository in Nevada. I sense the majority of Nevadans would rather not have Nevada host a nuclear waste repository, but the opposition may not be overwhelming.

I think a lot of people believe that we're helpless against the feds and that the state has put on a good show to try and slow it down. They've gone to court and they've lost, time and time again. I think a lot of people feel that the state should, "Let DOE get out there, let DOE characterize the site to see if Yucca Mountain is suitable, and let's get a

determination one way or another. If it's going to happen, it's going to happen, because what can Nevada do in Washington, D.C.?" It's just like, what can Nye County do in Carson City?

RM: Do you see the suitability of the site as a foregone conclusion?

SB: No, I don't. Again, because of the NRC. I think there are some pretty strict siting guidelines out there and I think the NRC's going to hold DOE's feet to the fire.

RM: Do you think it's likely that it would not be licensed?

SB: I think it's a strong possibility it will be licensed. There are certain drop-dead disqualifiers, such as if you've got water coursing through the site. Well, there is water in the area but it's 300 or 400 feet below the storage horizon.

Another disqualifier is that you couldn't build a repository at a site if the site has some economic value to the United States, such as maybe oil or gold. I don't think you'd find oil or gold at Yucca Mountain.

Of course, DOE could find a buried Aztec princess—a cultural site that has some archaeological significance. But even if they find a buried Aztec princess, if she is by herself, the site would likely be suitable; if she has a lot of people with her down there, then Yucca Mountain may be disqualified.

It really comes down to whether or not the site is geotechnically suitable, and the site characterization phase of the project will make that determination. For example, when you put all those canisters down there, what's going to happen when the canisters heat up the rock over thousands of years? Will the storage area cave in? Or as one scientist, Jerry Szymanski says, is it possible some water will come up from below and erode the canisters? You have to look at all those things during the site characterization phase.

RM: Why is the state opposed? What are the reasons, aside from the political reasons, the List model that Bryan didn't want to follow? What are the reasons why they are against it, and how substantial are they?

SB: Well, of course, when you say for political reasons, you have to include the equity thing—Nevada does not receive electricity from a nuclear power plant and many Nevadans feel those who benefit from nuclear power plants should also be responsible for the waste generated by the plants.

RM: To me, that's never been a very persuasive argument because they get the gamblers from these places who have made their money from the nuclear power.

SB: Nevadans also feel the other states through Congress are ganging up on Nevada. None of the 50 states want to host the first high-level radioactive waste repository, and 49 states appear pleased as punch that their congressional delegation and the federal government are focused on Nevada. Nevadans feel the state of Nevada has a right to oppose that effort. Many Nevadans feel the repository decisions by the federal government and Congress violate the US Constitution.

RM: But if they wanted to build a giant telescope on Mount Charleston, they wouldn't say there was a constitutional problem.

SB: What they're saying is that the way the Constitution is crafted, 49 states can't gang up on one state. That's unconstitutional. Unless it's for the good of the country. The Constitution protects the minority against the majority.

RM: Right. So the question is, why don't they want it?

SB: I think the issue comes back to the unknown. People are scared to death. Maybe they've been frightened by the opposition, the politicians, but I think a lot of people are scared, and that's what the American Nuclear Energy Council's trying to change. A lot of

people are afraid of nuclear waste coming through what they perceive their communities and a canister opening up and spewing out lethal radioactive material.

RM: But I mean, they've got H bombs stored right out of Vegas; that stuff probably goes through there all the time.

SB: Yes, but they don't know that. I don't think people realize that is happening. They probably only know what they read in the paper and what they hear on the radio and TV.

RM: But why are the politicians opposed? To me, the fairness issue comes after, "It's not fair because we don't want it." Well, why don't you want it? Is it a real safety issue or is it something else?

SB: I think there may be a genuine concern on the part of a number of politicians about safety, and rightly so. I mean, it's been no secret that DOE as a federal agency has got a God-awful track record. Not just in the last couple of years, but over time. Its predecessor agencies, ERDA and the AEC, have been a bit sloppy. They've been pushing new technology and not worrying about the ramifications.

And of course in the last few years, we have learned about the federal bomb production program intentionally allowing stuff they knew was going to hurt people get into the air—that's got to be a concern. Nevadans say, "Well, here we have the agency involved with the federal bomb production program responsible for lethal material that could be stored in our state."

RM: So it's a legitimate concern—a fear of the unknown and a lack of trust.

SB: Yes, definitely a lack of trust. And the state is building on that all the time. DOE is shooting itself in the foot left and right. Admiral James Watkins, Secretary of Energy, to his credit, is allowing negative information about DOE's operations to be made public. He is saying, "Look, there are problems with DOE's operations, and we need to address

them head on.” He is saying, “We need to let people know what the federal government has been putting in smokestacks that has been harmful to humans near certain federal facilities.” Admiral Watkins is saying, “We need to let communities near our facilities know if they have been contaminated by DOE's operations over the years.”

And of course Nevada’s saying, “Wow-ee, if they did that to communities near their facilities, what’s going to happen to us with the repository?”

But then I come back to the NRC. I hate to put too much of a burden on the NRC, but the federal bomb production plants had no control whatever. They were black projects; nobody knew about them. Their job was to produce bombs quickly. The NRC was not involved in regulating the bomb production plants. The repository program is probably going to be the most studied and most public project in US history. There isn’t anything that won’t be known by the public. So you’re going from one extreme to the other.

DOE can’t handle operating in the full light of day. DOE is great in dealing with programs that are secret, where they just go in and bull their way through. For the Nevada Test Site activity they say, “It’s national security; you don’t need to know.” Suddenly, DOE is being told by Congress to have a public nuclear waste repository program. There are people in DOE that can’t handle this change. The culture in DOE is one of secrecy; you can’t change that culture overnight.

RM: That’s interesting. Do we have a chapter here—the culture of the agencies?

SB: I think that comes into the implementation. When you talk about DOE implementing it, you’ve got to talk about DOE's culture. I believe DOE is the newest cabinet-level department created. It was created in the late ’70s. People say when a new agency is created, the normal procedure is to take the deadwood, the people that are dead

weights in existing cabinet-level departments, and put them in the new agency. They say that early on, sort of the scum of the federal bureaucracy was moved out of HUD, the department of defense, and other agencies, and transferred into DOE.

I don't know if it's true or not but Admiral Watkins said, "I have not inherited the best agency in the government." He talked about a problem with the DOE's culture and mindset. So what you may be looking at here in DOE is this federal agency with a very critical, very important, program but they don't have the necessary human resources to implement the repository program because DOE early on had mediocre people for the most part, people that were sort of pushed out by other agencies.

But I think DOE's staffing is improving now. Over time DOE brought in new people who are capable and anxious to work on the repository program.

RM: As long as we're at it, let's talk about the culture in these other entities. Is there a culture in the state legislature? There's a seniority system that doesn't necessarily promote the best and it's dominated by Clark County. What other kinds of things might we say about the system there?

SB: The state legislature has been run by seniority, and it has had pretty good leadership over the years—the right people have sort of moved up. State Senator Jim Gibson and Assemblyman Joe Dini, are good examples of senior members of the legislature who are good leaders. When the state senate changed from one or two senators elected from each county to senators elected by districts based on population you saw an immediate shift in power to the populated counties and a loss of power in the rural counties. Since 1980, the majority of the members of the state senate come from Clark County, and as a result you see great opportunity for special legislation, legislation that will benefit Clark County. I believe two-thirds of the legislators live within probably 50

miles of each other in the Las Vegas Valley. They control the rest of the state. Las Vegas Valley has approximately 2,000 square miles, and the legislators from that valley control 110,000 square miles—in other words, the rest of the state. Bullfrog County was created by southern Nevada legislators, and it was definitely special legislation meant to benefit Clark County. Rural counties in Nevada have no power in the legislature. The old way of electing state senators ensured minority rights, just like in the US Senate.

RM: Is there a culture of the Las Vegas delegation? Do they have a particular worldview?

SB: I don't know if they do. Of course I think in this state, maybe there's a culture, as you and I have talked about before, where the objective is to fleece as many non-Nevadans as possible. [Chuckles]

RM: Right; fleece before you get fleeced, I think. [Laughs]

SB: Right. The fleecing mentality is awfully strong down south; stronger than other parts of the state. Bullfrog County is probably the prime example of that fleecing mentality. I have to emphasize that there have also been good legislators from the south over the years.

I don't know about the new legislators from down south. I think there may be some good ones there. In the last election, a lot of legislators were defeated, and I believe some good legislators replaced them. But it is interesting to note that in the last session, the '91 session, the senior people in the session said it was the session from hell, the worst session they ever had.

RM: Because they were unruly?

SB: Yes, unruly. And the reason was, as I say, Clark County is an 800-pound gorilla. It's been clumsy over the years—it's never been able to really get its act straight. But

now it's starting to get its act straight, and it's exercising its power, including its power of sitting on everybody else.

But on the repository, I think that the legislators, for the most part, are trying to stay away from any public statements of support for the repository. I believe a number of legislators want to temper the state's opposition to the nuclear waste repository, but they are afraid of negative press, at least negative press from the *Las Vegas Sun*. I think those who might be for the repository, or even neutral on it, have been in the closet for a number of years, and I think they may be coming out of the closet. State Senator Bill O'Donnell and State Senator Ann O'Connell, both from Clark County, are saying that they think maybe the state should cut a deal with Congress. That's new; we actually have legislators who are willing to be criticized in the newspaper.

RM: It looks to me like, in terms of Nevada, a critical mass is starting to develop of pro- or at least open-minded people. What has caused this change? It looks to me like they're saying, "Well, maybe it's time to negotiate," after they don't have any cards.

SB: Too late to cut a deal.

RM: Yes. There was a time when you might have got the supercollider, but now you're not getting hardly anything. Do you see it that way?

SB: The time was prior to December 14, 1987. When the congressional conference committee working on the Amendments Act of 1987 met December 14, 1987 and said, "Let's go with Nevada, forget about the other two sites," and John Dingell said, "Forget about providing compensation. Let's just move forward," it was over. The window of opportunity slammed shut on the 14th of December at that conference committee meeting.

RM: Why did Dingell take that hard position?

SB: I'm not sure, but he has a reputation of not being friendly to local government and state government.

RM: So the boat pulled out then with the goodies on it.

SB: The boat probably pulled out even before that. It was the summer of '87 when the boat was still at the dock. I went back there at that point in time, and it was apparent to me that the boat was still at the dock, with some goodies.

RM: Could you reiterate that story in detail?

SB: In July of '87, Andrea Dravo was still helping Nye County on Capitol Hill, and she and I had lunch with the president of the American Nuclear Energy Council, Ed Davis. He essentially said that if Nevada just followed the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982—the law said if you have a problem, you can file a lawsuit—ANEC would bend over backwards to try to help the state receive compensation for hosting the repository. He said ANEC would lobby folks on Capitol Hill to develop a compensation package for Nevada. I suggested the superconducting supercollider project, and he said ANEC would possibly put some funds in a compensation package for the collider project in Nevada. He said the federal government could pay half of the estimated \$3 billion cost, and ANEC pay the other half, or \$1.5 billion.

RM: What did you think when you walked away from that meeting?

SB: I thought there were some real possibilities. I went back and talked to the state people. I said, "Look, it seems to me the governor probably has a friend in Washington D.C., an attorney, working at some private law firm. He could be the governor's unofficial representative. And he should follow up my meeting with ANEC and also talk to key people on Capitol Hill—Bennett Johnston as well as Mo Udall—and see what kind of a deal there is out there if the state follows the law in fighting this and the NRC

protects the state per the Act. What they were telling me is, “If the state just follows the law, and the state is not an obstructionist, then there could be a deal out there—some money or programs for the state.”

So my suggestion was, “Go ahead, state, you should do that. Then if this thing does happen, the governor can always say, ‘I did some contingency planning behind the scenes, trying to look at the worst case scenario; that is, the repository coming to Nevada.’” As far as I know, the governor never did have someone follow up my meeting with Ed Davis.

RM: And you saw Davis’s offer as quite serious.

SB: Oh, yes. I thought it was flabbergasting. I just about spilled soup on my pants when he said ANEC was prepared to fund a portion of the collider project, and make sure it was located in Nevada. I said, “Wait a minute, Ed. The collider project cost \$3 billion.”

RM: I remember you telling me this and he said, “Well, what does Nevada want?” And you said, “How about the supercollider.”

SB: That’s right. He asked me what we wanted. . . .

RM: And he said, “Well, what else do you want?” and you said, “How about the super train from L.A. to Vegas?” And he said, “What else?” And you said, “Well, I’ll think of some more things.” Is that accurate?

SB: Yes, exactly. He said, “Give me a list.” He wanted a list, at lunch, of what we wanted. I said, “Here are the things I think Nevada might want.” I ran them by him and he said, “Keep going.”

RM: But by later that year, Congressman Dingell was opposed to providing Nevada compensation.

SB: Right. It was over. ANEC could still have done it; Dingell paid attention to ANEC. So in July and August of '87, and maybe September, there was time to cut a compensation deal. But by October, things were moving in the wrong direction for Nevada and, as I say, come December, it was over—on the 14th. When I sat there in that conference committee meeting and Congressman Derrick Butler said, “We know what we want, we want to have the repository in Nevada and not consider the other sites,” it was over. The compensation window was closed; slammed shut.

RM: You told that story in great detail about how you sat in on that committee meeting in '87 on December 14th. Do you want to tell that again for the record?

SB: It was a conference committee made up of about six senators and maybe ten congressmen. Their job was to come together and resolve differences in a piece of legislation that essentially was going to amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982. On the Senate side, they wanted to keep the three sites, but they wanted to characterize one site and have the other two sites follow. The senate bill had some money for the site selected—when construction started there would be \$50 million for the state, I believe, a year and if the repository was built, then during the operation period there would be \$100 million a year for the state.

Bennett Johnston sort of chaired the conference committee on the Senate side and rightly so, because he was the chairman of the Senator Natural Resources Committee, and his bill was being discussed. Joining Senator Johnston from the Senate was Senator Pete Domenici from New Mexico and Senator Alan Simpson from Wyoming. It seemed to me Senator John Warner was there from Virginia, and a couple of other senators, and the senators had their staff people. On the House side there were a lot of people. Mo Udall was sort of the leader on the House side, although he didn't say much. John Dingell

was next to him. Phil Sharp was on Udall's right and Dingell was on his left. And then further on down the table to Mo Udall's left was Derrick Butler, a congressman from South Carolina.

Derrick Butler was scared to death of the proposed Monitored Retrieval Storage facility in Senator Johnston's bill. The House did not want an MRS without the repository being built first. The House wanted to make sure the MRS was linked to the repository; that is, you can have an MRS, but you've got to have NRC actually approve a license to construct a repository before DOE starts work on the MRS. Butler was concerned that the MRS would be located in South Carolina because of the Savannah River Project, so he fought tooth and nail against Bennett Johnston's bill that did not link the MRS with a repository. A lot of people think Bennett Johnston didn't really care about a repository, and he just wanted an MRS. The MRS was supposed to be the interim solution; but to some it looked like it could be a permanent solution.

So they wrestled with that, and then they finally came up with this language where they linked the two. That was not something that Bennett Johnston wanted; that's for sure. And when Congressman Derrick Butler said, "We know what we want, we want to have the repository in Nevada and let's not consider the other sites." Bennett Johnston said what about the compensation for the host state in my bill? John Dingell said, "They do not deserve a penny." The outcome of the conference committee meeting was that Nevada would be first up for site characterization, and the other two sites were completely eliminated from consideration.

The conference committee also decided to eliminate the second repository. That's what the senators from the Northeast wanted because they were scared to death of having the second repository in one of their states. DOE had already started work on a second

repository, and there were people screaming and yelling at public meetings held by DOE in Vermont, Michigan, Virginia, and Georgia that they didn't want a repository in their states.

So in 1987, Congress passed the Amendments Act of 1987, and it requires DOE to only look at Yucca Mountain and the concept of regional equity (a second repository in the East) was eliminated. The Amendments Act of 1987 also links the MRS to the repository. The Amendments Act created the office of the nuclear waste negotiator. The nuclear waste negotiator's job was to find a state or tribe to volunteer to host the MRS. The Amendments Act also created a congressional technical review committee to oversee DOE, NRC, and EPA repository activity. Governor Bryan called the Amendments Act of 1987 the "Screw Nevada Act." Most certainly the Amendments Act treats Nevada poorly, but the Act has some positive provisions, such as the creation of the technical review board and the recommendations submitted by Nye County.

Nye County and its counterparts in Washington State and Texas worked hard to make sure their recommendations were considered by the key members of Congress. We kept preparing position papers on the provisions we wanted written into the Amendments Act. I remember the December 14 conference committee meeting was at about 2:00, and at noon Elgie Holstein, Phil Niedzielski-Eichner with Deaf Smith County in Texas, and I split up and went to find each one of the members of the conference committee to give them our last position paper on our proposed language for the Amendments Act of 1987.

RM: Not staff—full members?

SB: Members, if we could find them, and we gave them our position paper—where Nye County and local governments in the Hanford area and Deaf Smith County were coming from in terms of our amendments. In some instances, we found congressman and

senators in the hall, and gave it to them, and we talked to them. In other instances, we had to give our final position paper to staff, and we asked them to give it to their boss prior to the 2:00 p.m. meeting. I remember we had a lot of ground to cover because, as I said, there were about ten congressmen and six senators. Then we got in line outside the conference committee meeting room. The meeting room was small, and there were seats for about 20 observers, like us. We were lucky to get a seat.

RM: Describe the room.

SB: The room was very small, with a long conference table. The guys on the House side really didn't have enough room; ten of them had to squeeze in. There was only room for one row of chairs behind them. As I stated, there were only about 20 seats for observers. The staff people seem to be floating around.

RM: Was the meeting arranged so that any senator or congressman could attend?

SB: I think, but I don't know what the protocol was. Derrick Butler definitely was not a member of the conference committee, but he was there, and he did all the talking, really, for the House.

RM: And Nevada wasn't represented there, where they could have been.

SB: If Butler could show up, I think we could have had a senator or a congressman there. Barbara Vucanovich, I think, was back in the state so she was not on Capitol Hill. As I say, that was it. After that, the bill moved quickly through Congress and became law.

RM: What is your understanding of how the House came up with this idea to single out Nevada? What was behind that?

SB: I think probably a lot of things. Nevada did not have clout on Capitol Hill. Texas had 30 congressmen in the House and California, I believe, had 40 congressmen. Nevada

had two congressmen so we had no clout, to speak of. And I think a lot of congressmen view Nevada as sort of a dead zone out in the West. It's got the Test Site, and therefore they figure Nevada's the best place to store the nation's high-level radioactive waste. Texas, of course, wasn't going to have it because you had the Speaker of the House, Jim Wright, from Texas; and then the No. 2 guy in the House, the Majority Leader, Tom Foley, was from Washington.

RM: So it was very anti-democratic, in a sense. Or maybe it was very democratic in terms of votes. [Laughs] Why did it come out of the House? Because Nevada is proportionately less represented in the House than in the Senate?

SB: I don't know. I think the House guys were saying to the Senate, "We know what you're thinking, Senators, and you won't say it so we're going to say it. You know as well as we know that we want to have the repository in Nevada. If you're not going to say it, we're going to say it. Let's change the law and have Nevada be the only site to be looked at. Period." I don't think they were trying to punish Nevada or be underhanded—I think they were up front. They just said, "Let's stop playing games. If we follow your route, Bennett Johnston, you wanted to have the first site up and then two sites held in reserve. You know who's going to be first up—it's going to be Nevada. So let's just go ahead and make Nevada the site, and we should forget about the other two sites. Pull them out of the program altogether, and not spend a penny on them." And that's what they did.

RM: Do you think this came up on the spur of the moment or was it something they had talked about behind the scenes for a while?

SB: I think they had been thinking about it for some time. It may even be that it was coordinated with the Senate. The Senate has the reputation of being a gentleman's club.

In the House, those guys and gals roll their sleeves up and go after each other. They're sort of rough and tough and they bloody each other's nose whereas in the Senate, they don't do that kind of stuff, unless it's the Senate Judiciary Committee interviewing Clarence Thomas.

RM: What did you think when you walked out of that meeting?

SB: When they said, "Let's stick it in Nevada," as I say, I could hear the window of opportunity closing and I was thinking, "God, from July to December we had lost it." Because in July we had an opportunity to still fight the good fight, but develop a compensation deal. In July if we had said, "Yeah, we'll fight the good fight and there'll be three sites and we'll work with you on some compensation," then you probably would not have seen this narrowing-down to one site. You would have still had three sites out there and you would have had some compensation. So the worst possible scenario came to the fore in December. Not only did we get nothing, but we also were singled out for the first and maybe only repository.

RM: We got the booby prize. We got the old maid; that's really what it is.

SB: But Bennett Johnston's such a powerful person that I still, in my mind, wonder if it wasn't somehow contrived, prearranged. Because that guy normally gets what he wants. For him to sit there and sort of let the House push him around at the conference committee meeting—I don't know if that's possible if he didn't want it to happen. But you've got to remember that 98 senators out of 100 were pleased as punch over the decision and so were 433 congressmen out of 435.

Of course afterwards, the Nevada delegates said, "Oh, it's not fair. We'll get this thing turned around. Our colleagues will say that this is not fair." Well, that's B.S. To think that a senator from some other state would say, "Oh, yeah, let's go ahead and open

this thing up.” Why would a senator from another state want his state to have a chance to be the storage site for the nation's high-level radioactive waste? I think what we saw on the part of Nevada's congressional delegation was their lack of clout on Capitol Hill and their inexperience.

RM: Because it was both Reid and Hecht, both junior senators.

SB: It would not have happened if we had had Alan Bible and Howard Cannon in the Senate. With their experience as well as their committee connections, the other senators would have had to make the repository selection process fair and equitable.

RM: But as it was, they paid no price; Nevada had a couple of lightweights in there.

SB: And I'm not blaming them. You've got to be there for 20 years to be a heavyweight; and then you have to be in the right party. I was lucky, I think, to sit in on that conference committee meeting. I saw history in the making. There may have been other important meetings on the Amendments Act; I'm drawing conclusions based on what I saw on the 14th of December, 1987.

RM: Okay. Well, we've got Chapter 7 and that's intergovernmental relations. Where do you see the book going from there?

SB: Let's see. The story, or the book, is on the impact of the history of the repository program in Nevada. We've got intergovernmental relations, and then we've got to have a section on the status of the program.

RM: Do we need a chapter following this that summarizes or in some way synthesizes what we can know and understand based upon what we have talked about? In other words, are there any salient principles in political science or Nevada life or Nevada culture or anything that this sheds light on?

SB: Lessons learned? What could we have done with 20/20 hindsight?

RM: This thing with the conference committee meeting and the Ed Davis meeting—I've always thought that was geopolitical dynamite. The supercollider. Can you imagine the fuss if that appeared?

SB: When you write this, I would say that Ed Davis should be interviewed. You were talking about all these federal agencies; there's also the nuclear energy industry. What did the nuclear energy industry do during this time? You have two industry groups that were front and center, the American Nuclear Energy Council and the Edison Electric Institute—EEI and ANEC. They were trying to get the repository program moving. ANEC is the political wing of the nuclear power industry and EEI is the technical wing. So when you're talking about the history of the repository program in Nevada, keep in mind ANEC and EEI have a lot of clout with Congress.

RM: Yes; and I think that Bennett Johnston is very close to them.

SB: Oh, yes. Recent stories indicate that he's received big bucks from the energy community for his campaigns.

RM: Well, thanks, Steve. This has been a really interesting discussion.

INDEX

A

- affected unit of local government status, 61, 88, 95, 138–141
 - Air Force MX Project. *See* MX Missile Project
 - Air Force, US
 - and EIS concerns, 21
 - MX Project announcement, 24–26, 28
 - MX Project cancellation in Nevada, 30
 - MX Project strategic justification, 23
 - officers placed in Nevada, 25
 - Alexandria, Virginia, Steve Bradhurst's childhood home, 2
 - Allen, Dick, 31
 - Amargosa Valley, Nevada
 - business from YM, 102
 - Desert Space Station, 106–107
 - Nevada Science and Technology Center, 104–105
 - solar energy plans for, 110–111
 - American Nuclear Energy Council (ANEC), 122, 155–156, 161–162, 170
 - American University, Washington, D.C., 5
 - Anacostia High School, Washington, D.C., 4
 - Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, 103
 - Ashcraft, Connie, 12
 - Association of Science and Technology Centers, 75, 103, 110
- ### B
- Babbitt, Bruce, 74–75, 78–79, 82–83, 101
 - Bayer, Don, 9–10, 150
 - Beatty, Nevada
 - business from YM, 102
 - Desert Space Station, 106–107
 - Nevada Science and Technology Center, 104–105
 - Beko, Bill, 60
 - Bennish, George, 77
 - Benton County, Washington, and Bullfrog County, 138–139
 - Bible, Alan, 169
 - Blakemore, Rich, 151
 - Blankenship, George, 93
 - BLM (Bureau of Land Management), 77, 105
 - book on YM, proposed structure
 - overall organization, 124
 - preface as chapter 1, 118–119
 - background as chapter 2, 119–120
 - congressional efforts as chapter 3, 120–123
 - Nevada as repository site as chapter 4, 123–124
 - NRC as chapter 5, 128–129
 - Nevada governments' reaction to YM as chapter 6, 132–135
 - intergovernmental relations as chapter 7, 145–151
 - summary as chapter 8, 132–135
 - Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment implementation, 129–130
 - Bradhurst, Amanda (Steve Bradhurst's daughter), 3–4
 - Bradhurst, Amy (née Metz; Steve Bradhurst's mother), 2–3
 - Bradhurst, Margaret Tayloe (née Sothoron) 'Beezie,' 3–4, 8
 - Bradhurst, Megan. *See* Solaro, Megan
 - Bradhurst, Peggy. *See* Thume, Peggy
 - Bradhurst, Stephen Thomas, Jr. 'Steve'
 - accessibility to key people, 143–145
 - Air Force major in office, 25
 - Anacostia High School, 4
 - attempted firing by Burke, 26–28
 - and Beezie, 3–4, 8
 - birth, 1
 - at Brown Military Academy, 4–5
 - Bullfrog County ruling, 60–61
 - as cab driver, 6–7
 - cab rides with father, 1–2
 - career overviews, 94, 116
 - on Citrus College basketball team, 4
 - close work with List, 41
 - closeout of MX Project, 31
 - communication with DOE, 51
 - at conference committee meeting, 163, 165–166, 168–169
 - as convenience store consultant, Arkansas, 10
 - Desert Space Station, 105–111
 - divided work responsibilities, 5–7, 33–35, 51, 83, 85–86, 112–114
 - and DOE proposal, 49
 - fee as repository director, 34–35
 - as geography and planning major, 7

Bradhurst, Stephen Thomas, Jr. 'Steve'
(continued)
 at George Washington University, 5
 graduate school search, 8
 high school sports, 4
 as high school teacher, 7–8
 at High's Dairy, 7
 House Interior and Insular Affairs
 Committee visit, 67–69
 integration, views on, 4
 interaction with senators and
 representatives, 70
 jobs while at GW, 5
 and Kennedy's assassination, 6
 and Laxalt, 23–24, 29
 left Nye County YM program, 44, 65–66
 List, speech writing for, 15–16
 Loux, relationship with, 54
 LVVWD work, 75–78, 82
 military 4F classification, 7–8
 mother's death, 1
 MS in geology, 9
 MX Missile Project directorship
 appointment, 12–14, 50
 need for Washington D.C. liaisons, 142–
 143
 as Nevada MX Local Oversight
 Committee director, 11–12
 Nevada Science and Technology Center
 development, 103–104
 1981 legislature briefing, 26–28
 at Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment
 discussions, 72–73
 Nye County cooperation, 49
 as Nye County interim manager, 36, 111–
 113
 as Nye County liaison to Congress, 114
 as Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository
 Program director, 83, 91–92, 132–133
 Nye County Water Planning Department,
 66
 and OCRWM, 51
 offered repository and planning program,
 33–34
 Pahrup subdivisions, 36–37
 PETT payments for YM, 63–67
 placement of staff members, 26
 as planning consultant, 31
 position on MX Project, 18
 position paper on Nuclear Waste Policy
 Act Amendment, 165–166
 as postal employee, 7
 presentation to Nye County
 commissioners on YM, 33
 recommendations on YM, 32, 40–42,
 133–134, 161–162
 Regional Planning Commission job, 9–10
 replacement as Nye County Planning
 Department director, 83
 repository position as (hypothetical)
 governor, 45
 retirement issues, 35–36
 on rowing team at GW, 5
 Strolin, relationship with, 54
 Tonopah, biweekly trips to, 34–35
 treatment by officials, 51–52
 Udall, first experience with, 73
 at *US News and World Report*, 5–6
 Washoe County Board of County
 Commissioners, 44, 65, 82–83, 85, 109
 Washoe County Department of Water
 Resources director, 109
 white paper on YM, 32, 40–44, 48, 133
 Bradhurst, Stephen Thomas, Sr. (Steve
 Bradhurst's father), 1
 Bradhurst, Sue (Steve Bradhurst's
 stepmother), 2
 Bradshaw, Les, 83, 92–94
 Brown, Holmes, 139
 Brown Military Academy, 4–5
 Bryan, Dick
 attempted separation from YM, 147–148
 Bullfrog County creation, 57
 DOE letter to governors, 40, 48, 124
 fuel and emission regulations, 101
 legislative bill on subdivision approval,
 39–40
 as new governor, 32
 Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment,
 45–46, 87
 opposition to YM, 42, 44, 126–128
 site selection criteria question, 125–126
 white paper requested from Steve
 Bradhurst, 48
 Bullfrog County, Nevada
 on AAA map, 61
 and affected unit of local government
 status, 141–142
 creation for PETT money, 54–55, 57, 61–
 62, 65, 91
 fleecing mentality, 159
 Hickey as creator, 148
 local government definition, 138–139

- Bullfrog County, Nevada (*continued*)
 and Nuclear Waste Policy Act
 Amendment, 56, 61, 87
 Nye County protection from, 58–59, 115–116
 relation to Clark County, 55, 57–58, 61–62
 unconstitutionality of, 59–61
 Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 77, 105
 Burke, Kelly, 26–28
 Butler, Derrick, 46, 72, 163–164, 166
- C
- Cannon, Howard, 169
 Carlsbad, New Mexico, 129
 Carver, Dick
 as county commissioner, 67
 and LVVWD work, 75–76, 80–82
 MX EIS review, 20
 Steve Bradhurst’s involvement overview, 94–96
 support for Steve Bradhurst as Nye County manager, 111, 113–114
 Carver, Midge, 95–96
CBS News on MX Project, 24–25
 Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, 95–96
 Central Nevada Utility Company (CNUC), 37–38
 CEQ (Council on Environmental Quality) guidelines, 21
 Chayes, Antonia, 17
Christian Science Monitor on MX Project, 24–25
 Christiansen, Paul, 81
 Churchill County, Nevada, 62, 87, 141
 Citrus College, Glendora, California, 4
 Clark County, Nevada
 as affected unit of local government, 87, 141
 and Bullfrog County, 57–58, 61–62
 Colorado River Compact, 84–85
 emotions about nuclear waste, 152
 and federal funds, 152–153
 help with funding to Nye County, 136
 LVVWD, 75–78, 81–82
 in Nevada legislature, 158–160
 nuclear waste transport concerns, 90–91
 and NWPA, 54
 planning commission, 10–11
 Steve Bradhurst’s job offer from, 11
 school district and Desert Space Station, 106
 Southern Nevada Water Authority water importation project, 115
 view of rural Nevada, 101
 YM funding, 62
 Clinton, Bill, 82
 CNUC (Central Nevada Utility Company), 37–38
 Colorado River Compact, 84–85
 committee chairmen and staff people, relationships with, 144–145
 Como, Perry, 63
 compensation for taking YM, 127–128, 160–164, 168
 conference committee meeting on reactor sites
 compensation opportunity lost, 168
 and Davis meeting, 161–162, 170
 lack of Nevada representation, 166, 168–169
 MRS bill, 164–165
 Nevada chosen for repository, 166–167
 Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment provisions from Nye County, 165–166
 second repository eliminated, 164–165
 senators/representatives on committee, 163–164
 Congress
 1970s repository bill, 47
 Bullfrog County effect on Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment, 87
 committee chairmen, 68
 funding requests for repository, 56–57, 135–137
 Nuclear Waste Policy Act, 46–47, 120–121
 Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment, 121, 164–165
 PETT bill, purpose of, 64–65
 Steve Bradhurst as Nye County liaison, 114
 second repository issue, 119–120, 164–165
 state vs. local dealings, 70–71
 summertime visit to Nevada, 67–69
 technical review committee for oversight, 165
 units of local government protection, 58–59
See also conference committee meeting on reactor sites

- Constitution, US, 155
 Cooper, Ben, 70, 140–141, 143
 Copass, Red, 67
 county commissioners vs. state legislature, 148–149
 Craigie, Scott, 37–38
 Crawford, Shirley, 94
- D
- Davis, Bob, 113–114
 Davis, Ed, 161–162, 170
 Daykin, Frank, 60
 Deaf Smith County, Texas
 and Bullfrog County, 138–139
 as possible repository site, 46, 56, 72
 Udall’s knowledge of, 73–74
 Death Valley National Monument, 103
 deceptive developers, 36–38
 Denver, Colorado, growth and development, 100
 Department of Energy (DOE)
 authority and restrictions, 130
 Desert Space Station, funds promised for, 105, 107
 funding to Nye County for YM, 50–51, 135–137
 letters to candidate states, 40, 48, 124
 and local governments, 52, 88
 meetings attended, 51
 Nevada Science and Technology Center, 104
 PETT payments for YM, 62–67
 resistance at site possibility areas, 71–72
 role in Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment, 129
 secret vs. open programs, 157
 site selection criteria question, 125–126
 staffing problems, 157–158
 transport accident concerns, 90, 97
 YM proposal, 49
 Department of Interior, US, 82
 Department of Transportation, US, 52–53
Deseret News MX Project political cartoons, 23
 Desert Space Station
 and Clark County schools, 106
 and community events, 106–107
 economic viability, 105
 facilities description, 105–106
 funding/fundraising, 105, 107–109
 naming rights for funding, 110–111
 Nevada Science & Technology Center (nonprofit corporation), 107
 as Nevada Science and Technology Center, 75, 105
 Nevada Test Site Development Corporation, 109
 project put on hold, 109
 renewable energy companies and, 111
 Steve Bradhurst as nonprofit president, 107
 Top Gun School, 106
 and William H. Williams, 109
 Dingell, John, 72–73, 101, 163–166
 Dini, Joe, 158
 DOE. *See* Department of Energy
 Domenici, Pete, 70, 72, 163
 Dravo, Andrea, 71, 139–142, 161
 Duckwater Tribe, 80
- E
- E. Verner Johnson and Associates, 104–105
 Eastley, Joni, 95–96
 economic future, right to, 97–99
 Edison Electric Institute (EEI), 170
 EIS (Environmental Impact Statement), 19–21, 77
 Ellsberg, Daniel, 48
 Ely, Nevada
 annual press conference, 13
 House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee visit, 68–69
 environment, care of, 97–99
 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), 19–21, 77
 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 129–130
 Esmeralda County, Nevada
 as affected unit of local government, 87, 141
 Nevada MX Local Oversight Committee, 11
 proposal to close for national security, 18
 YM funding, 62
 Eureka County, Nevada
 as affected unit of local government, 87, 141
 PETT payments for YM, 62
 Exploratorium, San Francisco, 103–104, 110
- F
- federal bomb production program, 156–157
 fire flow, 37–38

- Foley, Tom, 167
 Foreman, Bob, 62–63, 65
 Fort Holabird Army Base, Maryland, 7
 Fort Washington, Maryland, Steve
 Bradhurst’s childhood home, 2
 funding requests for repository, 56–57, 135–137
 See also Yucca Mountain Repository Project, funding for
- G
- GAO (Government Accountability Office), 146
 Garcia, Joe, 139
 Garn, Jake, 22–23
 George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 5–7
 geotechnical suitability, 154
 Getto, Virgil, 151
 Gibson, Jim, 158
 Gilman, Paul, 143
 Government Accountability Office (GAO), 146
 grants equal to taxes. *See* Payments Equal to Taxes
 Greenspun, Hank, 126
 Grose, Andy, 32, 48, 133
- H
- Hammon, Cheryl, 94
 Hanford, Washington, as possible repository site, 46, 56, 72
 Hannigan, Dave, 67
 hearings for application to construct, 130–131
 Hecht, Chic, 45, 169
 Henson, Jim, 67–69
 Hickey, Tom, 54, 148–150
 High’s Dairy, 7
 Hill, Bob, 12
 Hodel, Donald, 124
 Holstein, Elgie
 and conference committee meeting, 165
 on consultant team for YM, 93, 142
 NWPAs, understanding of, 71
 as Nye County representative, 57
 home rule, 149
 House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, 67–69, 140
 House Natural Resource Committee, 67–69
 Housing and Urban Development, US, disclosure document, 37
- Hulse, Jim, 20
- I
- integration, 4
 intergovernmental relations
 GAO and DOE, 146
 involved governments defined, 145–146
 legislative oversight committee and Nevada YM office, 149–151
 Nye County and Congress, 148–149
 state and affected units of local government, 146–148
 state legislature and governor, 147–148
 Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, 68
 Inyo County, California, as affected unit of local government, 87–88, 141
- J
- jailed protestors, 48
 jelly eggs/jelly omelets, 2
 Johnson, Carl, 134–135
 Johnson, E. Verner, 104–105
 Johnston, Bennett
 campaign contributions from energy community, 170
 conference committee meeting on reactor sites, 163
 GAO reports to, 146
 Louisiana salt domes, 125
 MRS bill, 164
 Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment, 72, 127–128, 137
 Nye County commissioners invitation to testify, 148
 perks for taking YM, 127–128, 161
 as powerful person, 168
 as Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee chair, 57, 70
- K
- Kennedy, John F., 6
- L
- LA Times* LVVWD story, 78
 Lake Tahoe, Nevada, WGA meeting on MX Project, 15–16
 Lake Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Board of Governors, 86
 Lander County, Nevada
 as affected unit of local government, 87, 141

- Lander County, Nevada (*continued*)
 Nevada MX Local Oversight Committee, 11
 proposed closure for MX project, 18
 YM funding, 62
- Landon, Michael, 5
- Las Vegas, Nevada, quality of life, 98
- Las Vegas Review-Journal*
 LVVWD article, 81
 repository position, 153
- Las Vegas Sun*
 repository position, 153, 160
 ‘Where I Stand’ (O’Callahan), 17
- Las Vegas Valley Water District (LVVWD)
 water importation project, 66, 75–78, 83–84
- Lathrop Wells, Nevada, Nevada Science and Technology Center, 75, 103–104
- Latter Day Saints position on MX Project, 29
- Laxalt, Paul, 14, 22–23, 25–26, 29
- League of Conservation Voters, 78
- letters to repository candidate states, 124–125
- Lincoln County, Nevada
 as affected unit of local government, 87, 141
 groundwater applications from Las Vegas, 66
 and LVVWD, 75–79, 81–82
 Nevada MX Local Oversight Committee, 11
 proposed closure for MX project, 18
 YM funding, 62
 and YM repository program, 54
- List, Kathy, 13, 27
- List, Robert
 close work with Steve Bradhurst, 41
 and draft response guidelines, 21
 job offer to Steve Bradhurst after MX Project, 26
 objectivity on MX project, 126
 at Ormsby House Hotel and Casino reception, 27
 and Steve Bradhurst in MX Project, 12–13, 15, 18, 94–95
 team to explore MX Project, 44–45
- local government
 affected unit of local government status, 87, 141
 definition, 138–139
 economic future, right to, 97–99
 funding uses, 97
 Nuclear Waste Policy Act restrictions, 70–71
See also Bullfrog County, Nevada; Nye County, Nevada
- Loeffler, Gretchen, 94
- Logan, Coeey, 49
- Logan, Jane, 33
- Los Angeles, California, quality of life, 100
- Louisiana salt domes, 125
- Loux, Bob
 DOE funding omission for local government, 52
 on MX Missile Project team, 32
 and Nevada Department of Energy, 133
 and OCRWM, 49–50
 PETT funding work, 62
 position on YM program, 50
 Steve Bradhurst’s relationship with, 54
 team to YM, 133–135
- Lujan, Manuel, 70
- LVVWD. *See* Las Vegas Valley Water District water importation project
- M
- Mackey School of Mines, University of Nevada, Reno, 9
- Man and the Biosphere Conference (United Nations), 10
- man camps, 18, 21–22
- ‘Man’s Largest Project,’ 22
- Maslach, Joe, 67
- Matheson, Scott, 17, 124
- May, Paul, 149
- McCarthy, Jim, 27–28
- McCracken, Robert, 88–89, 93
- McKay, Brian, 37
- McKnight, Jerry, 111
- McRae, Cameron, 67
- media and Yucca Mountain, 153
See also individual media sources
- Metz, Amy. *See* Bradhurst, Amy
- Mifflin, Marty, 77
- Mineral County, Nevada, 141
- missile shelters, real and dummy, 16–17
- missile transporters, 22–23
- Monitored Retrieval Storage (MRS) facility, 164–165
- Mormon Church position on MX Project, 29
- Mulroy, Patricia, 82, 84
- Murphy, Mal, 93
- MX Missile Project

- cancellation and closeout, 30–31
 - consulting team to governor, 41–42
 - EIS, 19–21
 - House Interior and Insular Affairs
 - Committee visit, 67–69
 - land area affected, 18, 22
 - Management Committee, 12
 - military applications vs. socioeconomic impacts, 22
 - missile shelters, real and dummy, 16–17
 - missile transporters, 22–23
 - Nevada population's position on, 126
 - 1981 legislature briefing, 26–28
 - old missile silo usage, 24–25
 - place in Nevada history, 118–119
 - political cartoons on, 23
 - program announcement, 24–26, 28
 - proposed closure of Nevada land, 18
 - Steve Bradhurst as Nevada MX Local Oversight Committee director, 11
 - Steve Bradhurst's involvement overview, 94–95
 - socioeconomic impacts on Nevada, 18–19, 21
 - strategic justification for, 23
 - in Utah, 16–17
- N
- National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL), 142
 - National Environmental Policy Act, 77
 - National Park Service, 105
 - NCSL (National Conference of State Legislators), 142
 - Neighbors, Roy, 35, 51, 75, 114–115
 - Nellis Air Force Base, 91
 - Nellis Air Force Gunnery Range, 103
 - NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) guidelines, 21
 - Nevada, state of
 - attitude toward MX Project, 17
 - county funding for YM, 134–135
 - fairness issues, 156
 - governments' reaction to YM, 132
 - lack of nuclear power plants, 155
 - overview of critical issues, 94
 - perks for taking YM, 160–163
 - public's views of Yucca Mountain, 160
 - repository office, 92
 - role in nuclear history, 124
 - as sacrificial area for US, 16–17
 - site selection criteria question, 125–126
 - socioeconomic impacts by MX Project, 21
 - state vs. local dealings, 70–71
 - summer heat, 67–69
 - 'true Nevadan,' 101–102
 - See also* Nevada legislature; Yucca Mountain Repository Project
 - Nevada Commission on Nuclear Projects, 147–151, 153
 - Nevada Department of Taxation, 62–64
 - Nevada Legislative Commission
 - Bullfrog County ruling, 60
 - Desert Space Station, 107
 - Nevada legislature
 - conflict with governor, 147–148
 - culture of, 158–160
 - delegations in, 151–152
 - Desert Space Station, 107–108
 - and local governments, 148–149
 - MX Missile Project, briefing on, 26–28
 - Nevada Commission on Nuclear Projects, 147
 - Nevada MX Missile Project Department, creation of, 14
 - Nevada State Nuclear Waste Project Office, 134, 149–151
 - subdivision approval bill, 39–40
 - water protection bill, 114–115
 - and YM repository program, 54
 - See also* Bullfrog County, Nevada
 - Nevada Mining Association, 23
 - Nevada MX Local Oversight Committee, 11–12
 - Nevada MX Missile Project Department, 14, 31–32, 40, 50, 116
 - Nevada Press (UNR), Nye County oral histories, 89
 - Nevada Science & Technology Center (nonprofit corporation), 107
 - Nevada Science and Technology Center, 75, 105
 - See also* Desert Space Station
 - Nevada Supreme Court, 39–40, 59–60
 - Nevada Test Site, 103
 - Nevada Test Site Development Corporation, 108
 - New York Times* LVVWD story, 78
 - Niedzielski-Eichner, Phil, 56, 92–93, 165
 - NRC. *See* Nuclear Regulatory Commission
 - nuclear fuel cycle, 119
 - Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)
 - communication failure, 128

Nuclear Regulatory Commission
(continued)
 hearings for application to construct, 130–131
 and Nye County Nuclear Waste Office, 52–53
 public’s views of, 131–132
 role in Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment, 129
 site suitability/control over YM, 154, 157
 nuclear waste
 as public vs. private responsibility, 121
 quantities, 119–120
 transport accident concerns, 90–91, 97
 nuclear waste negotiator, office of, 165
 Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment (1987)
 and affected units of local government, 87–88
 amendments from Nye County input, 137–138
 and Bullfrog County, 56, 58–59, 87
 funding to Nye County for YM, 136–137
 House and Senate decision for YM, 167–169
 implementation, 128
 lack of representation on hearing for, 166–167
 and Nye County, 56
 Nye County and Congress, 135–136
 perks for taking YM, 127–128, 160–163, 168
 regional equity provision deletion, 72–74
 repository sites narrowed down, 121
 as ‘Screw Nevada Act,’ 45
 second repository issue, 46, 72, 120
 and Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee, 70
 YM as sole repository site, 123–124
See also Bullfrog County, Nevada; Yucca Mountain Repository Project, funding for
 Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA; 1982)
 Dravo’s help with, 71, 139–142, 161
 history leading to Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment, 130
 local government funding omission, 52, 134
 Nye County’s funding position, 70–71
 PETT payments for YM, 64–65
 and politics, 46–47
 second repository issue, 46, 119–120, 123, 164–165
 state vs. local funding, 51
 Udall as father of, 45–46
 utility companies’ surcharge to government, 122–123
 Nye County Assessor, 64
 Nye County, Nevada
 Board of Commissioners, 36–39, 143–144
 budget appeal process, 113
 cooperation with Steve Bradhurst, 49
 courage to stand up for rights, 115–116
 Desert Space Station, 105–111
 economic future, 97–99
 funding through NWPA, 50–51
 groundwater applications from Las Vegas, 66
 help from Congress, 58–59
 issues with state, overview of, 115–116
 and LVVWD, 75–79, 81–82
 manager selection process, 111–112, 114
 and Nevada MX Local Oversight Committee, 11
 Nevada Science and Technology Center, 75, 104
 Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment, 56, 165
 Nuclear Waste Policy Act restrictions, 70–71
 opposition to YM, reasons for, 155–156
 oral history collection, 88–89
 and PETT, 54–55, 57, 62–67
 pragmatism on YM, 151–152
 proposed closure for MX project, 18
 Steve Bradhurst left repository program, 44
 Steve Bradhurst’s work with commissioners, 94–95
 water program, 66
 Water Resource Planning Department, 114
 YM as potential repository site, 32
 YM funding, 62
See also Bullfrog County, Nevada
 Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Office
 and congressional staffers, 141
 creation, 51
 federal agencies worked with, 52–53
 funding from DOE, 92–93
 lawsuit against DOE on PETT, 92

- Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Office (*continued*)
 locations, 48–49
 Steve Bradhurst’s white paper at, 43
 socioeconomic impacts of repository project, 88
 staffed by consultants, 93
 state office, relationship to, 92
 treatment by DOE, 52
- Nye County Press, 89
- Nye County Town History Project, 89–90
- Nye County Water Planning Department, 66
- O
- O’Callahan, Mike, 17
- O’Connell, Ann, 160
- O’Donnell, Bill, 160
- Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM), 49–51, 53
- Olson, Ken, 17
- Oppenheimer, Frank, 103–104
- oral history collection as socioeconomic baseline, 89
- Ormsby House Hotel and Casino, 27
- Owens Valley, California, 79
- P
- Pahrump, Nevada
 Colorado River Compact, 85
 Desert Space Station, 106–107
 Nevada Science and Technology Center, 104–105
 subdivision approval bill, 33–34, 36–40, 115–116
- Payments Equal to Taxes (PETT), 54–55, 57, 61–62, 67
- PEC (Preferred Equities Corporation), 37–39
- perks for taking YM, 127–128, 160–164, 168
- Pioche, Nevada, 12
- Planning Information Corporation, 92–93
- political cartoons on MX Project, 23
- politics and Nuclear Waste Policy Act (1982), 46–47
- position paper on Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment (1987), 133
- Post Office, US, 7
- Preferred Equities Corporation (PEC), 37–39
- primus inter pares* (first among equals), 54
- Principia Mathematica, 77
- private sector efficiency, 121–122
- Public Service Commission, Nevada, 37–38
- public’s views of Yucca Mountain, 153–154
- Q
- quality of life and economic future, 97–100
- R
- rail transport of nuclear waste, 90–91
- Railroad Valley, Nevada, Duckwater Tribe and LVVWD, 80
- Raper, Barbara, 75–76
- Reagan, Ronald, 29, 118
- Reagan National Airport, 6–7
- real and dummy missile shelters, 16–17
- Redelsperger, Ken, 39, 148, 151
- Regional Planning Commission of Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County, 9–10, 31
- Reid, Harry, 44–45, 90, 108, 169
- Renny, John, 5
- Reno, Nevada, quality of life and economic future, 99–100
- Revert, Bob
 LVVWD work, 76
 as Nye County Commissioner, 32–33
 Pahrump subdivisions, 38–39
 Steve Bradhurst’s involvement overview, 94–95
 support for Steve Bradhurst as Nye County manager, 111, 113–114
 work on YM, 139
 working with Steve Bradhurst, 35
- review committees for EIS, 19–21
- Rhoads, Dean, 114–115
- Rocha, Guy, 31
- Rossman, Tony, 77
- rowing, 5
- rural vs. urban needs, 99–101
- Russian nuclear threat, 16–19
- Ruud, Bob, 33
- S
- safety issues, 90–91, 97, 156–157
See also Nuclear Regulatory Commission ‘Sagebrush Alliance,’ 20
- Santini, Jim, 14, 67–69
- Savannah River Project, 164
- Sawyer, Grant, 147
- schools, 4–5
- Screw Nevada Act. *See* Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment (1987)

second repository issue, 71, 119–120, 123, 164–165
 Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee, 57
 Shalmy, Pat, 10–12
 Sharp, Phil, 164
 Shulman, Neal, 56
 Siberling, John, 67–69
 Siemens Corporation, 107
 Simpson, Alan, 72, 163
 Smith, Jim (Steve Bradhurst’s stepbrother), 2–3
 smog/haze, 100
 socioeconomic impacts
 assessment of YM, 88, 92
 of MX Project, 18–19, 21
 Solaro, Dave, 4
 Solaro, Emma (Steve Bradhurst’s granddaughter), 4
 Solaro, Jessica (Steve Bradhurst’s granddaughter), 4
 Solaro, Megan (née Bradhurst; Steve Bradhurst’s daughter), 3–4
 Southern Nevada Water Authority water importation project
 and Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, 96
 citizen opposition, 102
 political opposition to, 114–115
 urban vs. rural needs, 99
 Spriggs, Galyn, 151
 Springmeyer, Don, 77
 Stahl, Leslie, 24–25
 state legislature committee, 149–151
 state legislature vs. county commissioners, 148–149
 ‘Steel Wheels Tour,’ 78–79
 Strolin, Joe, 51–52, 54, 134–135
 Sundowner Motel, Tonopah, 34, 112–113
 supercollider, 127, 160–162
 Szymanski, Jerry, 154

T

technology-created problems, 119–120
 Thume, Peggy (née Bradhurst; Steve Bradhurst’s sister), 2–3
 Tonopah, Nevada
 biweekly trips to, 34–35
 history book on, 89
 House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee visit, 67–69

Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Office, 48–49
 Top Gun School, 106
 transport accident concerns, 90–91, 97
 transporter drivers as suicide mission, 23
 truck transport of nuclear waste, 90–91, 97
 Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Governing Board, 86
 Truckee River, 99
 ‘true Nevadan,’ 101–102
 two repository requirement. *See* second repository issue

U

Udall, Mo
 conference committee meeting on reactor sites, 163
 and Dravo, 140
 as House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee chair, 70
 as House Natural Resource Committee chair, 57
 as jokester, 74
 and NWPA, 46, 71–73, 123, 137
 and Parkinson’s disease, 73
 perks for taking YM, 161
 PETT payments for YM, 71
 presidential campaign, 73–74
 safety processes for YM, 131
 United Nations Man and the Biosphere Conference, 10
 urban vs. rural needs, 99–101
US News and World Report, Steve Bradhurst worked for, 5–6
 Utah, state of
 MX Missile Project in, 17
 as sacrificial area for US, 16–17
 utility companies’ surcharge to government, 122–123
 utility planning, 63

V

Van Valkenberg, Samuel, 7
 Vento, Bruce, 67–69
 Vieth, Don, 53–54, 126, 135–137
 Voegele, Mike, 43, 47
 Vucanovich, Barbara, 166

W

Wadhams, Jim, 12–13, 18
 Wagner, Mary Louise, 140–141
 Warner, John, 163

- Warren, Bob, 23–24
- Washington, D.C.
 accessibility to key people, 143–145
 Steve Bradhurst’s birthplace/childhood home, 1–2
 Steve Bradhurst’s school attendance, 4
See also Congress
- Washington Post* LVVWD story, 78
- Washoe County Board of County Commissioners, 82–83, 85–86
- Washoe County Department of Water Resources, 109
- Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP), 129
- water
 and area’s economic future, 97–99
 for facilities, 21
 for fire hydrants, 37–38
 groundwater applications from Las Vegas, 66
 LVVWD, 75–78
 Pahrump subdivisions, 33–34, 37–40
 state water law findings, 115
 water protection bill, 114–115
- water importation project. *See* Las Vegas Valley Water District water importation project; Southern Nevada Water Authority water importation project
- Water Resource Planning Department, 114
- Watkins, James, 156–158
- Weinberger, Cap, 25
- Weldon, Fred, 150
- West Office Design, Oakland, California, 104–105
- Westergard, Roland, 12–13, 18
- Western Governors’ Association (WGA), 15
- ‘Where I Stand’ (O’Callahan), 17
- white paper on Yucca Mountain, 32, 40–44, 48, 133
- White Pine County, Nevada
 as affected unit of local government, 87, 141
 groundwater applications from Las Vegas, 66
 and LVVWD, 75–78, 80–82
 Nevada MX Local Oversight Committee, 11
 proposed closure for MX project, 18
 YM funding, 62
- wildlife, MX Project impact on, 21
- Williams, Jim, 93
- Williams, Ron, 49, 65, 83
- Williams, William H., 109
- WIPP (Waste Isolation Pilot Project), 129
- Woodward, Gary, 77
- world climatology, 7
- Wright, Jim, 167
- Y
- Yucca Mountain Repository Project ,
 funding for
 Clark County, Nevada, 62
 Department of Energy (DOE), 50–51
 Nevada, state of, 62
 Nye County, Nevada, 62. *see also*
 Bullfrog County, Nevada
See also Payments Equal to Taxes (PETT)
- Yucca Mountain Repository Project (YM)
 appraisal for taxes, 62–63
 Bryan’s opposition, 42
 county funding for, 134–135
 Desert Space Station, funds promised for, 105
 economic future, right to, 97–99
 funding through NWPA, 50–51
 geotechnical suitability, 154
 intergovernmental aspects, 44
 licensing issues, 154
 and MRS facility, 164
 Nevada governments’ reaction to, 132
 Nevada Science and Technology Center, 104
 Nevada’s opposition to, 127
 Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendment discussions, 72–73
 nuclear waste transport, 90–91, 97
 perks for taking YM, 127–128, 160–163, 168
 PETT payments from Nye County, 63–68
 place in Nevada history, 118
 politics vs. pragmatism, 151–152, 156
 as potential repository site, 32
 safety processes for, 129–131
 Steve Bradhurst’s 1983 recommendations, 40
 socioeconomic impacts of, 88
 transport accident concerns, 90, 97
 as utility for appraisal purposes, 63
 white paper on, 32, 40–44, 48, 133
- Z
- Zenoff, David, 59–60