

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

ROBERT A. LAURIE
COMMISSIONER

October 12, 1999



Mr. Tom Hallenbeck, Director
Caltrans District 9
500 S. Main Street
Bishop, CA 93514

RE: Request for Information on Road, Traffic and Safety Conditions for Proposed Routes in California for Low-Level Waste Shipments to NTS

Dear Mr. Hallenbeck:

As you know, the federal Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to reroute shipments of low-level nuclear waste (about 800 shipments per year) through southeastern California to the Nevada Test Site (NTS) in southeastern Nevada. The historical route for these shipments has been over Hoover Dam and through Las Vegas. However, in response to requests from Nevada and Arizona that these shipments avoid Hoover Dam and the Las Vegas Valley, DOE has proposed using alternate routes in California. A map is attached that shows the proposed southern routes to NTS (Attachment 1).

DOE met with affected states and local jurisdictions on June 3, 1999, to discuss this routing issue. At this meeting, state and local representatives agreed to gather technical information on the affected routes in their State, including CA 127, NV 160 and NV 372. Attached is a list of factors and information to be obtained for these routes (Attachment 2).

The purpose of this letter is to request information from Caltrans on roadway conditions, traffic and safety conditions, special operating conditions, and any other relevant information regarding the appropriateness of the proposed routes in California for nuclear waste shipments. We plan to use this information in discussions with DOE on the pros and cons of rerouting these shipments through California. We do not intend to use this information for the purposes of litigation.

Sincerely,

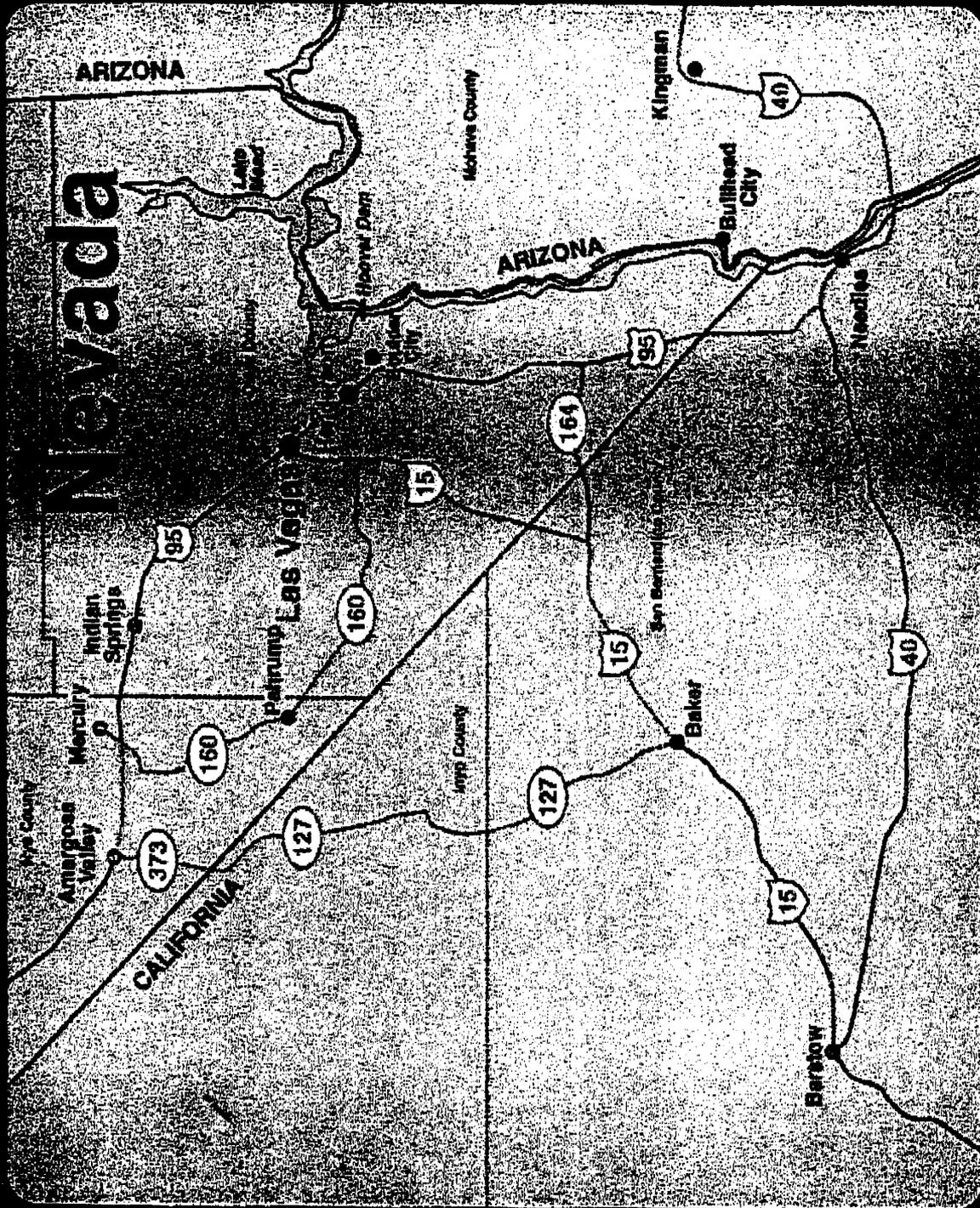
Handwritten signature of Robert A. Laurie in cursive.

ROBERT A. LAURIE
Commissioner

Attachments: 2

ATTACHMENT 1

SOUTHERN ROUTES



Attachment 2

**PROPOSED FACTORS FOR COMPARING ALTERNATE ROUTES TO THE
NEVADA LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITY****A. Roadway Conditions**

1. Highway Capacity rating
2. Number of travel lanes
3. Width of travel lanes
4. Width of emergency parking lanes
5. Left and right turn lanes
6. Divided highway segments, with and without medians
7. General pavement conditions
8. Weight and size restrictions that would affect a legal truck (US DOT standards)
9. Steep grades and sharp curves

B. Traffic and Safety Conditions

1. Latest traffic counts by vehicle classifications
2. Accident statistics for the past three years, noting types of accidents
3. Seasonal weather conditions and months that are likely to affect commercial truck operations, i.e. flash floods, snow and ice
4. Proposed construction activities (State/regional TIP) which would result in lane closures.

C. Special Operating Conditions

1. State restriction of a route for use for hazardous material shipments.
2. Time-of-day or week restrictions on hazardous material shipments.
3. Dates of special events that would cause significant traffic congestion problems.
4. Tourist and special commuter conditions
5. Communications dead spots (satellite and FM radio)
6. Emergency response and recovery services