

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

January 11, 2007

Dr. James T. Tegnella
Director
Defense Threat Reduction Agency
8725 John J. Kingman Road MSC 6201
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-6201

Dear Director Tegnella:

We appreciate the effort that the Department of Energy ("DoE") and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency ("DTRA") have made in conducting public meetings regarding the DIVINE STRAKE experiment. In particular, arranging for our constituents to directly ask questions of 22 DoE and DTRA experts was helpful and productive.

However, we fully agree with the disappointment felt by many of our constituents over the lack of a plenary session, where a senior government expert would speak on the record and answer questions in front of all the meetings' attendees. This is especially disconcerting since DTRA did make a commitment to us to conduct such a plenary session at the meetings.

Despite this disappointment, we do view the meetings as an important first step. Yet, the format used had important deficiencies. We understand that a number of attendees were confused as to which expert to ask specific questions and the belief of many that the answers they received were not consistent. Of course, this only increases the much deserved distrust that many Utahns have toward statements made by the federal government regarding radiation and activities at the Nevada Test Site.

In order to begin correcting this situation, DoE and DTRA should conduct additional plenary sessions, where questions can be put to government experts on the record and the answers can be heard by all of the meetings' attendees, as per the agreement that was reached between our offices and DTRA.

Thank you again for your attention to this matter and your continuing assistance.

Sincerely,



Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senator



Jim Matheson
United States Congressman