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Rep. Lon Burnam, District 90, Ft. Worth

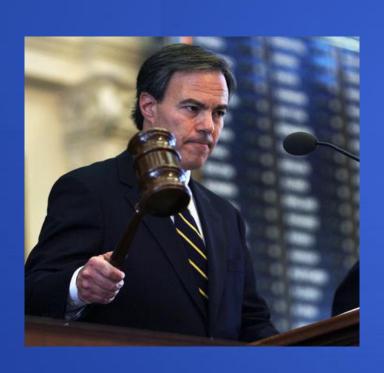
Robert V. Eye, Attorney

Dr. Arjun Makhijani, Institute for Energy & Environmental Research

Dr. Elliot Trester, Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility

Tom "Smitty" Smith, Public Citizen's Texas Office

High-Level Waste Importation is Being Considered by Texas Legislature



Interim Charge to Texas <u>House Committee</u> on Environmental Regulation

January 2014, from Speaker Joe Straus

Study the rules, laws, and regulations pertaining to the disposal of high-level radioactive waste in Texas and determine the potential economic impact of permitting a facility in Texas. Make specific recommendations on the state and federal actions necessary to permit a high-level radioactive waste disposal or interim storage facility in Texas

Governor Perry: Radioactive Waste Booster



- Governor Rick Perry wrote to Lt. Gov. Dewhurst and Speaker Joe Straus supporting bringing in high-level radioactive waste – which is mostly spent fuel rods from nuclear reactors, the hottest of radioactive waste – for storage or disposal
- Told a West Texas TV station that there is a "legitimate site in West Texas"
- A TCEQ report was included with his letter:

TCEQ Assessment of Texas's High Level Radioactive Waste Storage Options, March 2014

http://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1100389-tceq-assessment-of-texas-high-level-radioactive.html



Spent Nuclear Fuel – Deadly and Dangerous

LETHAL DOSE: Unshielded – a person one meter away can receive a lethal radiation dose, would be incapacitated immediately and die within a week

Radiation field would be over 20,000 rem/hour5,000 rem/hour would be a lethal dose – according to TCEQ report

Spent nuclear fuel "would damage the environment if the spent fuel pellets are aerosolized and dispersed"

RISKS

- transportation accidents or leaks, airborne spread radiation, water contamination
- Extreme weather risks tornadoes, flooding, wildfires
- Security risks, earthquakes
- Financial risks from cleanup of accidents or releases

TCEQ High Level Radioactive Waste Report

- "Any federal or private program to manage spent nuclear fuel (SNF) must be done in a way to reduce political uncertainty – and minimize state and local opposition through stakeholder meetings, finding volunteer communities, financial incentives and a fair and technically rigorous process"
- The report says "If the methodology used for siting these two sites is built upon, the siting and construction of a SNF storage or disposal facility is not only feasible but could be highly successful."
- Examples used: Waste Isolation Pilot Plant underground repository for nuclear weapons waste in Carlsbad, NM and Waste Control Specialists' Low-Level Radioactive Waste dump in Andrews County

WIPP Site Failure



- WIPP site touted as a gold-star standard repository for high level radioactive waste
- Was never supposed to leak
- Feb. 5, 2014: Less than 15 years into the 15,000 years needed for waste isolation, the site had an underground fire
- Feb. 14, 2014: Plutonium and americium leaked – detected 26 miles away
- 21 workers exposed to radiation.
- WIPP waste now coming to WCS since the the future of WIPP is uncertain.
- Safety failures found to be "pervasive"





Texas-Sized Risks

- Waste Control Specialists' site in Andrews County is one site under consideration
- The entire TCEQ radioactive waste staff recommended against licensing the WCS site due to the presence of water and contamination risks.
- 40% of monitoring wells showed water present (Oct. 2013)
- WCS license continually being expanded; protective provisions are being gutted – a bad precedent.



NRC - Technical Challenges:
Long-term degradation
Response to external natural events
Cladding integrity
Higher burnup fuel
In-situ monitoring

Centralized Storage NOT needed

- Spent fuel pools at many nuclear reactors are getting full, but the waste can be transferred to dry cask storage and be stored on site
- No centralized interim storage site is needed here or elsewhere
- NRC: 33 states have at least one Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) already – and 63 are licensed
- Dry casks can remain onsite for licensed life plus 60 years.
 Maybe a permanent repository will be developed by then.
- Why transport highly radioactive waste across the country, risking accidents, leaks and contamination?