

radioactive waste
campaign

rwc Waste Paper

Summer 1987



Photo by Bern Ketchum, Topeka Capital-Journal

April 30 about 500
rally on Statehouse
steps in Topeka urging
lawmakers to pull

Kansas out of LLW
Collection Leaks Foundation
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The Radioactive Waste Campaign promotes greater public awareness of the dangers to human health and the biosphere from the generation of radioactive waste. The Campaign's programs include research, information dissemination and public education.

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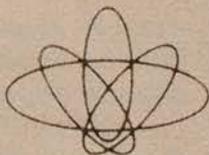


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Radioactive Waste
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Editorial

Nuclear Waste Decision-Making The Rise of the Super State

By Minard Hamilton

Powerful utility and government interests are battling to keep nuclear waste decisions in the back room.

Meanwhile, citizens are taking to the streets to force decision-making out into the open. When 6000 people show up for a public hearing in Beloit, Kansas (see page 8) something very serious is happening within the Republic.

At stake are decisions regarding the potential permanent contamination of underground water supply systems, the possible jeopardy of significant agricultural resources (even while the seemingly inexorable march of global hunger continues apace), the assured deadening of vast tracts of land—and the biological health of future generations.

Also at stake is the type of government under which we live. Is it to remain the flawed democracy it currently is? Move towards a form of government that is more vitally participatory? Or to slide towards an authoritarian Super State?

It is in the realm of "low-level" waste that the erosion of democratic principles is, already, far advanced.

In 1980, the Low Level Radioactive Waste Policy Act was passed. Initially presented as a way to correct the inequity of only three sites serving as dumps for the entire nation, the Act called for the establishment of new dumps in each region of the country. But the Act has fostered an even greater inequity.

The bill established the mechanism to take decision-making away from duly elected state legislatures and hand it Compact Commissions. These are basically unaccountable regional commissions, consisting of gubernatorial appointees from each of the member states.

Some citizens have dubbed the re-

gional commissions, "Super States." Some Commissions have the power to select a "host" state for a new regional "low-level" dump site, to override state siting regulations, and to set financial liability limits.

These are awesome powers given the toxicity and longevity of some of the materials in the "low-level" waste stream.

And what recourse do citizens have if they do not like a Compact Commission decision? A state governor can be removed. But given the 4-year scheduling of gubernatorial elections and the number of years it takes to remove a governor, the "low-level" waste dump decision may already have been made. Besides, even if the governor goes, the appointee remains behind, as well as appoin-

*At stake is the type of
democracy under which
we live.*

tees of other governors in the compact.

Further, the compacts' decisions are made at meetings whose location shifts between member states. This means those wishing to attend a meeting may have to travel thousands of miles. How many citizens from St. Louis are going to make it to Madison for a commission meeting?

Not only citizens but also state legislators are now learning what regional compacts mean in terms of an erosion of democratic decision-making.

In the Mid-West Compact there was to have been a 90-day period in which a selected "host" state could decide to withdraw. Without ad-

*Minard Hamilton is director of the
Radioactive Waste Campaign.*

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Case for MRS Gets Weaker

By Marvin Resnikoff

Studies by the State of Tennessee show that the Department of Energy's proposed monitored retrievable storage (MRS) facility is entirely unneeded. Furthermore, these studies argue that all functions can be handled better with less expense at each reactor.

An authorization request for the proposed MRS facility that will receive, package and store nuclear fuel was submitted to Congress in the spring of 1987.

"The more we looked into the MRS, the more DOE's arguments vanished, like Jack Daniels at a tractor pull," in the down-home words of Ruth Neff, Chair of the Governor's team appointed to investigate the Energy Department proposal. Neff presented the State's remarkable findings at a meeting May 22 in Maryville, Tennessee, coordinated by Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and other environmental groups.

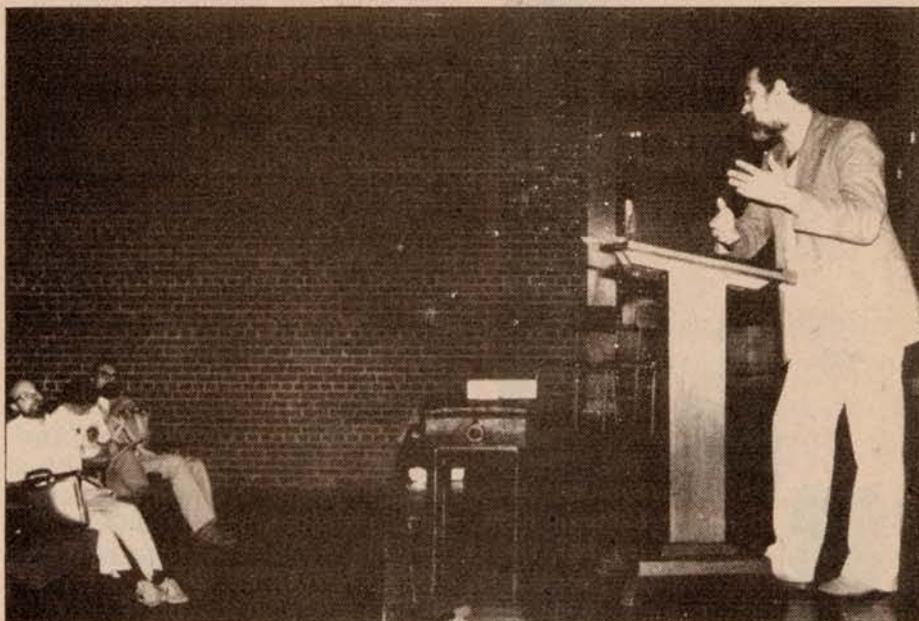
The Energy Department's rationale was to have a buffer storage facility in case operation of a Federal repository was delayed, and to separate the

The Energy Department has counted on the MRS to rescue its failing image.

packaging from the repository mining operations. Over 70,000 tons of highly radioactive fuel would be shipped to Oak Ridge where it would be disassembled and packed tightly into large storage containers.

A possible hidden agenda was to centralize all nuclear fuel for a future reprocessing operation at Oak Ridge, where plutonium would be extracted from nuclear fuel for re-use in nuclear reactors or nuclear weapons.

Marvin Resnikoff is staff scientist for the Radioactive Waste Campaign.



Campaign staff scientist, Marvin Resnikoff, making a presentation at the MRS Conference in Tennessee.

To assuage countless communities and states nervous about the impact of irradiated fuel passing through, the Department presented the MRS as a means of reducing the number of shipment-miles, a unit of measurement concocted by the Department. Unit trains, hauling five 150-ton containers, each containing up to 38 tons of nuclear fuel, would then travel to the proposed western repository from the MRS.

Faced with environmental, State, Congressional and industry skepticisms that it could safely manage irradiated fuel, the Energy Department also counted on the MRS to rescue its failing image.

But the studies, performed by the University of Tennessee for the State, completely take the cover off these arguments. The analysis shows that if reducing the number of shipment-miles is the criterion, the greatest reduction comes from packing irradiated fuel into large storage and transport containers at each reactor, and shipping this highly radioactive material directly to the Federal repository, bypassing the intermediate MRS step. This would result in a 40

percent reduction in mileage.

While the search is on for a Federal repository, irradiated fuel can be stored in large metal or concrete containers at each reactor rather than at the proposed MRS. In what is likely to be a growing trend, two utilities were licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in the Summer of 1986 to store irradiated fuel dry.

At Virginia Power Company's Surry reactor, older nuclear fuel is now being stored in the CASTOR-V/21 cask, holding 21 intact pressurized water reactor fuel assemblies. Measuring 16 feet long, and 8 feet in diameter, and weighing 115 tons when fully loaded, these modular iron casks are being stored vertically on a concrete pad near the reactor.

At Carolina Power & Light's HB Robinson reactor, seven irradiated fuel assemblies are packed into a metal container which is stored in a horizontal concrete box.

Both concepts are modular, so that utilities can buy more units as they are required. With the burgeoning need, more manufacturers are coming forward with new designs. Plans by Mitsubishi, Transnuclear, Westin-



Photo by Marvin Resnikoff

The CASTOR-V/21 cask dwarfs visiting environmentalists at Virginia Power's Surry reactor site.

ghouse, Combustion Engineering, NuPac and GNS have now been filed with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for approval. This private development of dry storage at nuclear reactors has come about without assistance from the Department of Energy, who has become fixated on a centralized storage approach.

As demonstrated by the Tennessee study, the Energy Department's arguments were gerry-rigged to provide a favorable case for the MRS. According to the Energy Department, fuel would be shipped from the reactors to the MRS in a 1960's transportation system, using the same rail and truck casks presently utilized.

But shipments from the MRS to the repository were assumed to move in a highly optimized system, in massive casks holding 21 to 38 metric tons of fuel in 150-ton casks, five to a unit train.

If the transportation system from the reactors were also optimized by using larger casks, barge shipments, heavy haul trucks and unit trains, the Energy Department's rationale for an MRS would completely vanish. The number of shipment-miles and ton-miles would be minimized with direct shipments from reactors to the repository.

The Tennessee study carefully evaluated the capabilities of each reactor to handle large storage and transport containers, concluding that an optimized reactor transportation system was possible. A June 1987 study by the General Accounting Office, "Nuclear Waste: DOE Should Provide More Information on MRS," agrees, stating that the Department of Energy has not made a good case for an MRS.

Because of questions about the Department's handling of the nuclear repository programs and abrasive interactions with states, Congress is seriously questioning whether the Department is the appropriate agency to handle the waste management program.

In anticipation of Congressional legislation, Congressman Morris Udall circulated a questionnaire in June asking whether Representatives and Senators would support 1) a commission to review the Energy Department's management of the program, 2) getting the Energy Department out of the waste management program, and 3) payments to States as an incentive to site a waste repository or MRS. Udall also sought recommendations on how to get the waste program on track. A bill by Senator

The DOE has become fixated on a centralized storage approach.

Sasser would establish an independent commission to study the waste problem and make recommendations to Congress.

As another indication of Congressional displeasure with the Energy Department, the present House appropriations bill has no funds for an MRS facility or exploratory shaft con-

struction at proposed repository sites.

The MRS concept was originally proposed by Senate Energy Committee Chair, Senator Bennett Johnson, in 1979, as a 100-year storage facility to prevent a repository from going to Louisiana, Johnson's home state.

Seeing the repository program fall further behind schedule, in the Fall of 1984, the Energy Department's director of the waste program, Ben Rusche, redefined the MRS concept to be a "temporary" storage facility so that the Energy Department could begin accepting nuclear fuel by 1998.

While awaiting a Federal repository, irradiated fuel can be stored at each reactor.

All programs that conflicted with the MRS mission were then precipitously cut off.

In particular, funding for Westinghouse and Tennessee Valley Authority to design a combined storage, transportation and disposal container that could be shipped directly from the reactor to the repository was halted in mid-stream. The Energy Department thereby attempted to stack the information deck in favor of an MRS. But the Department had not counted on the type of sophisticated analysis performed by the State of Tennessee.

Action: Order a copy of the GAO study, "Nuclear Waste: DOE Should Provide More Information on MRS," GAO/RCED-87-92, and two studies by the Waste Management Research and Education Institute, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, "The MRS: An Assessment of its Need and Feasibility," and "Status of Spent Nuclear Fuel Management Technology."

Urge your Representative or Senators to cut off funding for the MRS, and to support an independent commission to review DOE's conduct of the waste management program.

For up-to-date information on the MRS, contact Leon Lowrey at the office of the Southern Environmental Network, located at Environmental Action, 1525 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

What Is High-Level Waste?

By Cia Iselin

On February 27, 1987, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission indicated its intention to amend the definition of "high-level radioactive waste" (HLW) to conform more closely to the statutory definition in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act defines high-level waste as

"(a) the highly radioactive materials resulting from the reprocessing of spent fuel, including liquid waste produced directly in reprocessing and any solid material derived from such liquid waste that contains fission products in sufficient concentrations; and (b) other highly radioactive materials that the Commission, consistent with existing law, determines by rule requires permanent isolation."

Left out of the Act's high-level waste definition are wastes from decommissioned nuclear reactors. This means extremely long-lived and hazardous radioactive materials, such as nickel-59, niobium-94, and iodine-129, are placed in the "low-level" category.

The Act also refers to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission code classification of "low-level" waste in 10 CFR 61.55, to which the proposed amendment of waste is addressed. It is based on two tables, one for "short-lived" radionuclides and one for "long-lived."

Cesium-137 and strontium-90 appear in the short-lived category—even though their half-lives make them hazardous for about 300 years.

The long-lived category includes the plutonium family and five other radionuclides with half-lives over 5730 years, rendering them hazardous for hundreds of millennia. This, coupled with the lack of an NRC regulation controlling dilution, raises serious questions as to whether the tables are appropriate for determining the difference between high-level

and "low-level" waste.

As things stand, it is on the basis of the concentration in curies per cubic meter that wastes are classified above or below Class C, the most radioactive and long-lived category for "low-level" waste. Those *above* are the responsibility of the Federal government; those *below* are to be disposed of in state landfills or near surface facilities.

In theory, under this regulation, decommissioned reactors could in their entirety be diluted sufficiently to be placed in a local, state or compact landfill.

In the proposed amendment for HLW definition, the NRC contemplates going a step further and using the 10 CFR Part 61 Tables to narrow their definition of HLW to include only those wastes that exceed the limits of concentration specified in *both* the long- and short-lived tables.

James Asselstine, NRC Commissioner, retired as of June 1, 1987, dissented from the adoption of this option. He fears that an interpretation of existing law might allow "wastes

"[T]he terms high-level and low-level . . . mislead legislators."

Jesse L. Riley
Sierra Club

presently being stored at the Hanford waste tanks, which have been traditionally classified as high-level wastes [to be] reclassified as Class C low-level wastes." This might affect NRC's authority over their disposal or storage options.

Jesse L. Riley, Chair of the Sierra Club's Nuclear Subcommittee, submitted comments on the proposed ruling on the definition of "high-level" radioactive waste:

"The initial dichotomy of radioactive waste into 'high-level' and 'low-level' has given the erroneous impression to the general public that one kind of waste, low-level, is essentially harmless . . . The crowning ab-

Under this regulation decommissioned reactors could be diluted sufficiently to be placed in a local landfill.

surdity is that an irradiated core shroud [of a decommissioned reactor], at 3.5 million curies/cubic meter, is 'low-level.'

"This inadequacy of definition needs correcting and there is no better time than now. The language of NRC documents makes clear a recognition of the deficiencies in a definition that goes back to the early days of nuclear development and is more suited to promotional purposes than a competent treatment of the broad variety of waste streams.

"I propose the deletion of the terms high-level and low-level because they are inappropriate and mislead legislators who try to deal with the problems of radioactive wastes as if there were only two kinds."

Action: Call on your Senators and Congressmen. Tell them of your concerns about radioactive waste definitions. Urge them to support a moratorium on further action so that a radical change for the better can be made in amending NWPA.

For updates on moratorium moves, call Caroline Petti of the National Nuclear Waste Task Force at (202) 457-0545.

Cia Iselin is a member of the Radioactive Waste Campaign board of directors.

Editorial/continued

vance public notice to citizens or members of the state legislature who voted to join the compact, the 90-day provision was deleted by the Compact Commission in the Spring of 1987.

Currently, the only remedy for a dissatisfied state is withdrawal from the compact. This means proponents of withdrawal must be up-front about abandoning the dream that the state's nuclear waste will go into somebody else's backyard and up-front about promoting the politically painful—a dump within state borders. In addition, withdrawers must pay a stiff financial penalty.

How this Super State monster, which slipped through Congress just seven years ago with virtually no public debate or media coverage, came about is partially explained by an unfortunate degradation of language which has occurred.

For example, "low-level" waste as defined by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission includes some materials which will be hazardous for *tens of thousands* of years.

Similarly, the term "host" is used to designate selected dump sites. This phrase is reminiscent of Bread and Breakfast Inns and convivial din-

ner parties. A more appropriate designation might be "victim" state.

Even the idea that dumps will be "closed" after 20-25 years, carries its own illusions. Certainly, a facility that is assumed to "be open" for only 25 years neatly side-steps the issue of storage of materials whose toxicity is of the 25,000 and 100,000-year variety.

The parallel between the assault on language and the assault on democratic decision-making is no accident. If language is unclear and its

How this Super State monster came about is partially explained by a degradation of language.

meaning clouded, then those who are being excluded from the decision-making process, may not notice until *too late*.

We cannot believe legislators in Washington would have been quite so quick to set up regional compacts, if they had understood that "low-level" waste is, in fact, not "low-level" waste; and if what was being talked about was not just innocuous plastic booties or "slightly" contaminated refuse.

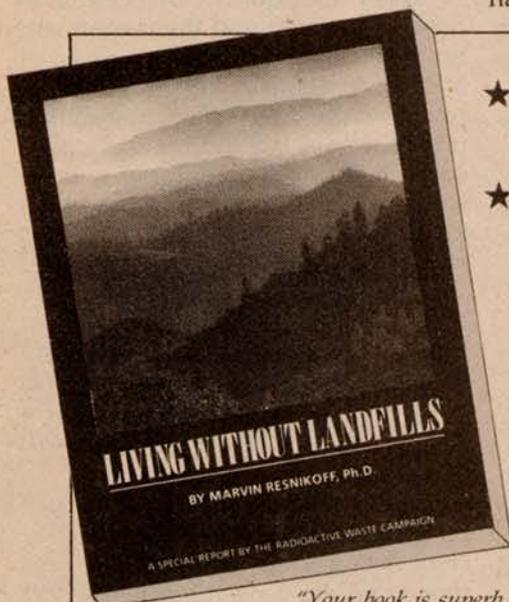
The mis-information neatly dovetailed with a desire we all share on a profound level—the desire to believe there are nice, neat solutions to the nuclear waste problem.

Not to believe this is either to go mad (the human mind, simply, cannot accept the devastation of generations and generations of contamination), or to pretend the problem doesn't exist, or to fight for a political and technical system which will promote the well-being of our descendants.

We need either to scrap completely the idea of Compact Commissions, or to build in mechanisms that guarantee representation of public interest organizations in open meetings that provide accountability.

We need to broaden our definition of which decisions the public has a right to participate in. We need to allow those who are being asked to accept the burden of nuclear waste *now* also to have the right to a choice about the production of nuclear waste in the first place. Should the production continue or not?

Without enriching democracy to include these types of questions, we may expect either a proliferation of new landfills—all of which will eventually leak—or a mass uprising by citizens who feel locked out of vital decisions.



"Your book is superb."

Carol Mongerson, Chair
Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes, E. Concord, N.Y.

"The final chapter of conclusions is really top notch."

Robert McLellan, M.D., Gesell Inst. of Human Development
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Mary Sinclair, Director of Great Lakes Alliance
Midland, Mich.

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Update on Namibian Ore

By Minard Hamilton

Grass roots opposition to the importation of Namibian uranium is starting to build in the U.S.

Namibia is the uranium-rich country illegally occupied by neighboring South Africa since 1966. Namibia's uranium ore reserves are currently being plundered by Rio Tinto Zinc, a consortium of South African and Western European firms—despite a United Nation's decree.

This decree bans the exploitation and exportation of Namibia's natural resources without the express permission of the U.N. And much of the ore extracted from Namibia eventually makes it way to the U.S.

On October 1, 1986, when the U.S. Congress passed an economic sanctions bill against the apartheid regime in South Africa, the U.S. government had an opportunity to take a stand on the Namibian question. The opportunity was botched.

Though the anti-apartheid bill explicitly banned the importation of uranium ore and uranium oxide ("yellowcake") into the U.S., it left an enormous loophole.

Uranium hexafluoride was not explicitly banned. U-hex, as it is known in the trade, is the gaseous form of uranium, to which uranium

Though Congress has left a giant loophole through which the banned uranium can travel, citizens are starting to take a more aggressive stand on the issue of what we call apartheid ore.

In Vermont, ratepayers have sued the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation and Central Vermont Public Service Corporation (which owns shares in Vermont Yankee) for their use of Namibian ore at the Vermont Yankee plant. The suit claims that because of United Nation's decree, the defendants are putting Vermont ratepayers in jeopardy.

The Vermont ratepayers argument is that the Corporation is using goods stolen from Namibia. Thus, after independence, Namibia will have the right to bill Vermonters a second time for the ore. Since a number of other U.S. utilities may be using Namibian ore, this is an interesting route for activists to explore.

Across the country in Seattle, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Local 19 is starting to monitor shipments of nuclear fuel being exported through the port of Seattle.

The Inland Waters Coalition, the Rainbow Coalition, and the American Friends Service Committee are planning a protest against shipments that travel from the Westinghouse

U.S. enrichment plant workers are being pitted against Namibian mine workers.

Fuel Fabrication facility in Savannah, Georgia, across the continental U.S., through Seattle and out to the Far East. Bills of lading show the fuel is on the way to Japan, Taiwan and South Korea.

Meanwhile, in Washington, DC, behind-the-scenes manipulations are fierce.

The Treasury Department has promulgated two regulations pertaining to uranium:

1) a Final rule which allows for the

continued on page 14

Namibia uranium after conversion can be legally imported into the U.S.

is converted for enrichment purposes.

This means the uranium of Namibian origin can be converted into the gaseous form at any one of a number of conversion plants in Britain, the Netherlands or France, then legally imported into the U.S. And the contraband material cannot be traced!

Minard Hamilton is director of the Radioactive Waste Campaign.

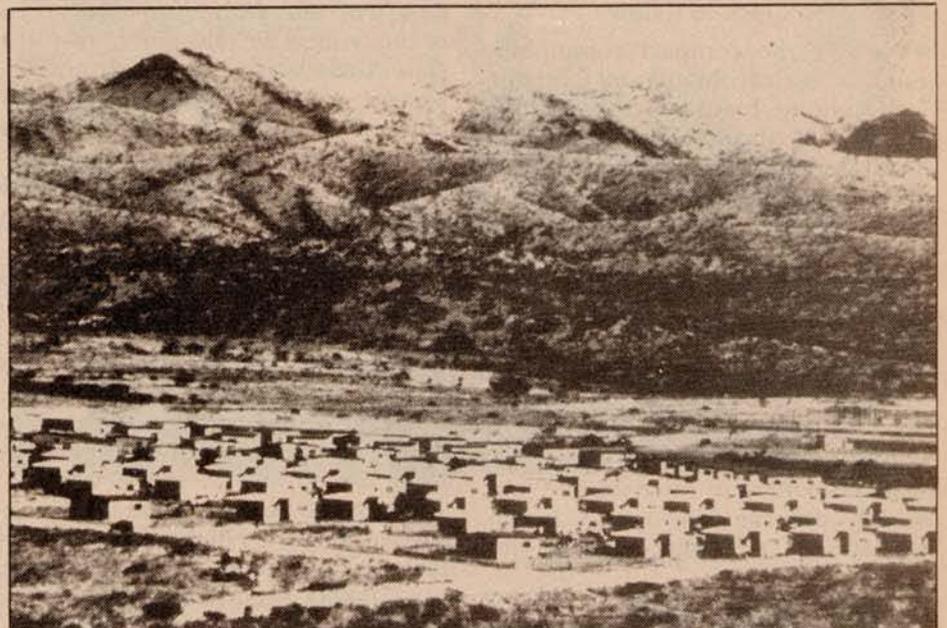


Photo by W. Raynor/United Nations

Pictured here is the Namibian township of Katurtura, four miles from Windhoek, the capital and main industrial center.

"Compact" Solution Goes Awry

By Jennifer Tichenor

The people just kept coming. Beloit, Kansas, had never seen anything like it. With a population of 4300, it is the largest community for a hundred miles. But Beloit had never had 6000 people come to town for a meeting before. On that warm March night, an estimated 2000 people had to be turned away at the door.

What had brought them out in such numbers, some of them driving hundreds of miles?

The Central Interstate Compact Commission was going to present the findings of their geological study—a study which would select possible sites for a "low-level" radioactive waste dump. Another chapter in this compact's story was about to begin.

It seems that the Central Interstate Compact (comprising Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, and Oklahoma) is one of the country's most unpopular compacts. From the start, citizens recognized that their participation in the compact process would be limited.

First, the governors of the affected states appointed the members of the compact's commission. Similar provisions were quick to follow:

- Neither the compact commission nor the Nuclear Regulatory Commission require insurance for the developer of the region's dumpsite. This eliminates the possibility of prosecution and recovery of damages if contamination occurs.
- The developer chosen by the commission of the dumpsite will have the right to select and build a disposal site.
- Under Federal law, states which do not enter into exclusive "low-level" waste agreements with other states will be required to accept such waste from elsewhere in the nation.
- Only after the developer is chosen, the specific site selected, the land

bought, the technology determined, and the site constructed and operating, is public comment to be scheduled.

There were other reasons why the citizens were upset.

Initially, it was stated that the compact site would need space for five million cubic feet of "low-level" waste—enough to fill a 10-story building the size of a football field—the five states would eventually produce. The waste would then be stored in this site for 30 years.

Dames and Moore, a New York

The options are "death by hanging or by electric chair."

Bob Bland
Arkansas Alliance

State consulting firm, performed the geological site study for the compact. Since stable clay geology and the quantity of waste produced by an individual state were supposedly two of the criteria for selection of the host state, there was some surprise when Kansas, which produces the least amount of waste, has a high rate of annual rainfall plus an unstable glacial geology, was assigned 109 (75 percent) of the 148 possible sites in the five-state region.

The rest of the study's findings were equally surprising to citizen observers.

The "best" of Nebraska's selected sites sits atop the Ogallala Aquifer, the largest underground water supply in the United States—yet Nebraska has 36 sites.

The water table at some of the Arkansas sites is as high as four to five feet, and the sites are directly over the Dakota Aquifer—yet Arkansas got two.

Louisiana gets more than 30 inches of rain a year on the average—and Louisiana got a site.

Then there's Oklahoma. The Oklahoma panhandle is geologically very similar to some of the potential areas in Kansas. Its Kerr-McGee uranium reprocessing plant has 2.3 million cubic feet of radioactive waste waiting to be shipped out, half of the volume of the proposed dump (Kerr-McGee has been saying for 14 years that it will ship this waste out to another reprocessing plant). And in 1986 alone, Oklahoma shipped out 50,000 cubic feet of nuclear waste, twice as much as any other state in the compact. Yet no sites were chosen in Oklahoma.

The only two companies bidding for the Central Interstate Compact site are US Ecology and Westinghouse. Citizens are becoming increasingly aware of the drawbacks of each developer, and many feel that the options are, as Bob Bland of the Arkansas Alliance puts it, "death by hanging or by electric chair."

US Ecology ran the radioactive waste sites at Beatty, Nevada, Maxey Flats, Kentucky, and Sheffield, Illinois. The last two sites have been closed down because of off-site leakage of radioactive materials.

Westinghouse has never built a commercial "low-level" waste facility, although, it is involved in the Maxey Flats cleanup. Even so, its track record with hazardous waste management might provide insight into its basic philosophy towards the environment. Westinghouse, after a nine-year court battle, recently agreed to the largest hazardous waste settlement in U.S. history, for the PCB contamination of Bloomington (Indiana) sewers and landfills (PCB's—polychlorinated biphenyls—are a cause of cancer).

Since 1980, various Westinghouse facilities have been cited 30 times for violations of the Federal Toxic Substances Control Act and other civil penalties or administrative actions. And sometimes actions speak louder than words. If Westinghouse gets the Central Interstate contract, it plans to name John Razor as the site's Operations Manager. Razor was the US Ecology's assistant site manager at

Jennifer Tichenor is the Campaign's office manager and President of the National Nurses Alliance for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

the leaking Maxey Flats dump. Perhaps the most bizarre revelation came from a *Progressive* magazine article, which recounted how, at US Ecology's Beatty, Nevada, site, "it was common practice to break open the crates of radioactive debris and sell the plywood as construction materials for fences, sheds and playhouses."

Many state representatives have called for such responsible recourses as bans on shallow land burial (passed in Arkansas and Kansas), mandatory third-party liability insurance (passed in Nebraska), and campaigns for referenda on the 1988 ballot proposing that their states withdraw from the compact (planned in Nebraska and Arkansas). Many of the communities chosen by the siting study have passed local measures against it. Louisiana's governor even went so far as to promise the state's residents in May that they would not get the site.

Raymond Peery, executive director of the Central Interstate Compact, told Kansas citizens at a March public hearing that, "People don't want it [the dumpsite] here. Obviously this is not an area to go to." He had given basically the same line to smaller, less vocal crowds at meetings in other compact states.

In a candid moment, however, Peery told other Kansas citizens at another public hearing that "If Kansas pulls out, this compact will probably dissolve. Then there's a chance

As awareness of nuclear issues grew, "not in my backyard" became "not in anyone's backyard."

that the whole system across the country will fall apart."

Since most of the proposed sites are in Kansas, so is most of the opposition. But Kansas' governor, Mike Hayden, has never attended citizen gatherings to discuss the compact issue. Hayden, from a rural Kansas background, carried 17 of the 18 northern, predominantly agricultural counties being considered for the dumpsite in his last election. But today, many Kansans feel betrayed by Hayden, and are demanding his recall.

Along the same lines, Stanley Grant, newly appointed head of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the state's top official on the compact issue, said in a June 1 interview that the health risks of a "low-level" waste dump would be no worse than the radiation from the sun on a summer day at the beach. "I look at it in essence like a national park or national monument . . . the public looks at it and enjoys the presence of it," Grant said.

Some people, such as the 3,000-member North Central Kansas Citizens, came together solely in response to the compact threat. Others in such established environmental groups as the Sierra Club were reenergized as their ranks swelled with anti-compact recruits.

At first, people were focused on fighting the waste because it was a direct threat to them and their communities. "My family's been on this land for six generations," said Carol Small of Rison, Arkansas, "If the trucks come, we'll all meet them at the country line." But as awareness of the nuclear issues grew, "not in

my backyard" became "not in anyone's backyard."

At the June 9 Compact Commission meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska, the Central Interstate Citizen Task Force was formed, with representatives from each state. One of the task force's main goals is to recruit a panel

"I look at [the dump] in essence like a national park."

Stanley Grant
Kansas Health Dept.

of scientific experts to assist with research and testimony, as well as to help the group analyze each state's radioactive waste stream.

The compact commission has not done such an analysis, perhaps recognizing that the more waste, the better the business. But citizens, who

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Truck with Radioactive Materials Jackknifes in New Jersey



Photo by Bob Glass, The New York Times

On February 3 a tractor-trailer containing eight boxes of carbon-14 jackknifed on Route 17 in Ho-Ho-Kus, N.J., closing the six-lane highway. The isotope, a byproduct of nuclear power production and weapons testing, was enroute from Cokeysville, Md., to a hospital in Glens Falls, N.J.

It's Burning Up Local Residents

Rocky Flats Test Burn

The "test burn" of plutonium-contaminated waste in the Rocky Flats Plant incinerator is testing the patience and organizing skill of local residents.

The off-again, on-again test burn of the production scale incinerator at the Department of Energy's Rocky Flats Plant is now set for August 17, unless court action by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund and local groups is successful.

The proposed production-scale incinerator would burn plutonium-contaminated waste and toxic chemicals at the Rocky Flats Plant, 16 miles northwest of Denver. The Energy Department's facility manufactures plutonium triggers for nuclear warheads, and recycles plutonium from old nuclear warheads.

Originally scheduled for May, the Energy Department has delayed the test burn to respond to numerous questions and objections by local residents, the Colorado Department of Health, and organizations such as American Friends Service Committee, Sierra Club, and Citizens Against Rocky Flats Contamination.

Following the test burn, and without waiting for the results, the Department of Energy intends to begin incinerating 150 pounds of solid waste or 60 pounds of liquid waste per hour.

The solid waste to be burned consists of radioactively contaminated materials such as polyvinyl chloride bags, paper wipes, rubber surgical gloves, and polyethylene bottles. The Department and its contractor, Rockwell International, have been ambiguous about disposition of the ash. Some documents state that the ash will be solidified, and others say that the plutonium would be chemically separated.

Local residents and state officials have questioned how much plutonium particulates, or toxic chemicals, such as PCB's or dioxins, would be released, and whether fires or explosions could occur. The proposed incinerator is a novel fluidized bed design, without the standard liquid scrubber to clean the off-gas. Waste materials would burn at a fairly low temperature, 1000°F, causing concern that toxic chemicals may

not be broken down before being released.

An affidavit by Dr. Marvin Resnikoff, Campaign Research Director, points out that the incinerator design does not monitor or control sulfurous and nitrous oxides, precursors of acid rain. His affidavit also shows the incinerator lacks an automatic cut-off to prevent a fire.

If a fire were to occur, the particulate filters would release plutonium to the atmosphere. Since the startup of the Rocky Flats Plant in 1952, eleven fires have released radioactive materials, including plutonium, into the surrounding environment. One fire of plutonium-contaminated oil in an outdoor barrel spread plutonium throughout the Denver area. Plutonium has been measured in the soil throughout the Denver area, with higher levels closer to the Plant.

Alternatives to incineration, such as supercompacting and storing solid waste, have been rejected by the Department of Energy without the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement customarily required by Federal law. The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund has instituted court action to force the Energy Department to produce an impact statement. The Federal District Court Judge has shown a reluctance to hear the case, urging the parties to settle.

With its typical arrogance and bureaucratic bungling, the Department of Energy has only antagonized local residents. A Review Panel appointed by local Congressman David Skaggs, and funded by the cities of Boulder and Westminster, was charged with studying the safety of the proposed incinerator. Though composed of Energy Department-recommended appointees, the Department refused to cooperate and to answer the Panel's questions.

In the end, the Panel did endorse the proposed incinerator, but its support was only lukewarm.

Action: For the latest information on the proposed Rocky Flats Plant incinerator, contact Jan Pilcher, Citizens Against Rocky Flats Contamination, (303) 832-4508, or the Sierra Club (303) 321-8292.

For more information on incineration, send for the Campaign's fact sheet "Burn-

ing Radioactive Waste: What Comes Out of the Stack?" It is available for \$1 from the Radioactive Waste Campaign, 625 Broadway, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10012.

Campaign Publishes *Living Without Landfills*

The Radioactive Waste Campaign is scheduled to release its comprehensive guide to "low-level" radioactive waste, *Living Without Landfills*, in early September. The book, the first ever produced by the Campaign, is expected to stir up the debate over radioactive waste.

Living Without Landfills, written for concerned citizens, policymakers, and government officials, defines "low-level" waste, what the experience has been in dealing with it, and what are the alternatives to putting it into landfills.

The book's author, Dr. Marvin Resnikoff, argues persuasively that landfills—which are imperfect containers—can be avoided if waste is segregated by radioactive half-life and treating longest-lived waste as high-level. Since over 90% of the volume of "low-level" waste is relatively short-lived, it can be stored.

The text in *Living Without Landfills* is accompanied by approximately 40 clear, easy-to-understand charts, tables, graphs, and figures. These allow readers to compare the volume, longevity, and hazard of wastes produced by nuclear power plants, medical and research institutions, and industry.

This 80-page study is available for \$10 (plus postage).

An *Executive Edition* of the book, which includes the basic study plus forty pages of supporting calculations, allows readers to adapt the figures to their State or Compact. The *Executive Edition* is available for \$90. For those with the capability, computer diskettes with these calculations cost an additional \$50.

Organizing Conference Against MRS Held in Tennessee

In May 22, some 60 activists from 13 southern states and seven other states plus the District of Columbia met in Knoxville to attend educational workshops and start building a regional alliance against the proposed monitored retrievable storage facility (see page 3).

As a result of the meeting, a regional organization was established—the Southern Environmental Network. Conference participants selected 13 members, each of whom represents one of the southern states present at the meeting.

The purpose of the Network is to monitor the work of the Southern States Energy Board as it applies to high-level waste transportation, and to coordinate the work of citizens in the region on nuclear energy, nuclear and hazardous materials transport, and nuclear waste storage. The Network will publish action alerts and an occasional newsletter.

During a strategy session, conference attendees endorsed the platform of the National Nuclear Waste Task Force on the MRS and the high-level waste repository program—with one key amendment.

The Task Force platform is an attempt to correct some of the inadequacies of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (see page 2). NWPA, as it is not so fondly known, set up the process and scheduling whereby a deep underground repository would be located.

But quickly, political considerations, contaminated science, and inadequate consultation and cooperation with affected states and Native American tribes surfaced as problems.

The Task Force calls on Congress to:

1) Bring a halt to DOE's flawed repository programs. No funds should be appropriated for siting activities in first or second repository states.

2) Disapprove DOE's proposal to develop a monitored retrievable storage facility. MRS is not a suitable alternative to either the geologic repository program or at-reactor inter-

im storage. No funds should be appropriated for the MRS program.

3) Establish an independent commission to review DOE's repository and MRS programs. Such a review would investigate the technical and institutional adequacy of these programs and make recommendations on how best to proceed.

4) Increase funding for development of at-reactor waste management technologies including but not limited to dry-storage technologies. Nuclear utilities must continue to rely on at-reactor storage while a sound geologic or alternative waste disposal system is being developed.

It was point 4 which caused concern and was amended to assure that there would not be a taxpayer subsidy of at-reactor storage. Conference attendees required that funding not come from the Department of Treasury—which is supported by taxpayer dollars. But that the money come

from the Nuclear Waste Fund, which is financed through nuclear utility contributions.

Whether this amendment will survive negotiations in Washington is debatable.

Conference attendees also endorsed the Price Anderson Act *with unlimited liability*, and supported the phase out of nuclear reactors.

For more information about the Southern Environmental Network, contact the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, P.O. Box 88, Glendale Springs, North Carolina 28629, (919) 982-2691. For legislative information, contact Leon Lowery, c/o Environmental Action, 1525 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 745-4870.

For more information about the National Nuclear Waste Task Force, write the Task Force at 2001 O St., N.W., Washington, DC, 20036, (202) 457-0545.



Photo by Marvin Resnikoff

Mina Hamilton, Director of the Radioactive Waste Campaign, conducting a workshop at the Tennessee MRS Conference.

Oak Ridge Releases Rise

Compared to 1985, releases of tritium and uranium from the Oak Ridge Reservation showed a dramatic rise in 1986, according to the *Environmental Surveillance Report* issued by the Department of Energy in April, 1987. However, releases of some radionuclides, such as cobalt-60 and strontium-90, declined.

The numbers are a reflection of specific activities at the Reservation in 1986, though improved waste management practices also played a role. The Oak Ridge Reservation is a 92-acre Federal facility at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, housing the Y-12 weapons plant, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and the shutdown Gaseous Diffusion Plant.

Tritium releases in 1986 from Oak Ridge National Laboratory, as measured in water concentrations at White Oak Dam, increased by a factor of 75, from 3,500 to 240,000 picocuries per liter. The increase was primarily due to airborne discharges of tritium from the Laboratory which reflected increased tritium produc-

tion. Oak Ridge National Laboratory packages tritium for use by manufacturers, including New England Nuclear in Massachusetts.

Releases of cesium-137 also increased in 1986, though strontium-90 declined to 1.8 curies, down from 3 curies the preceding year. All radioactivity released from the Laboratory passed by White Oak Dam before entering the Clinch River, a public waterway. The improvement for strontium-90 reflects efforts by the Energy Department to divert water from entering the burial areas and washing out radionuclides.

Uranium discharges to surface waters increased in 1986, despite the shutdown of the Gaseous Diffusion Plant. These releases were due to increased activity at the Y-12 Plant. The uranium concentrations in Bear Creek doubled in 1986, compared to 1985.

As shown in a report prepared by the Radioactive Waste Campaign this

past February, "Radioactive Contamination at Oak Ridge," the Oak Ridge site has become progressively contaminated over its 40-year history. Several burial areas are located within the water table, with strontium-90 draining out like flavor from a tea bag. Diversion of drainage water from the burial areas has led to a decline in releases, particularly from burial area 4.

Improvements in the solid waste burial areas at the Y-12 Plant have led to a decline in uranium releases, not reflected in the 1986 figures because of increased production at the Y-12 Plant.

We love to get mail! Send your comments, contributions, letters to The Editor, The Radioactive Waste Campaign Waste Paper, 625 Broadway, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10012.

Radiation Victims Conference

The First Global Radiation Victims Conference will be held in New York City September 26-October 3, 1987. This conference will bring together for the first time ever radiation victims from all aspects of the world's nuclear menace.

In addition to giving victims a forum in which to tell their stories, the conference will also hold a two-day symposia on "The Health Effects of Ionizing Radiation" and on "Law and Radiation."

The conference has been endorsed by over 100 national and international organizations.

Enrollment is limited, and interested individuals are urged to apply soon. The full conference will cost \$95, or just \$75 for the two-day symposium. For registration contact the Health and Energy Institute, 236 Massachusetts Ave., N.E., Suite 506, Washington, D.C. 20002.

Radioactive Cargo Train Derails Near Portland

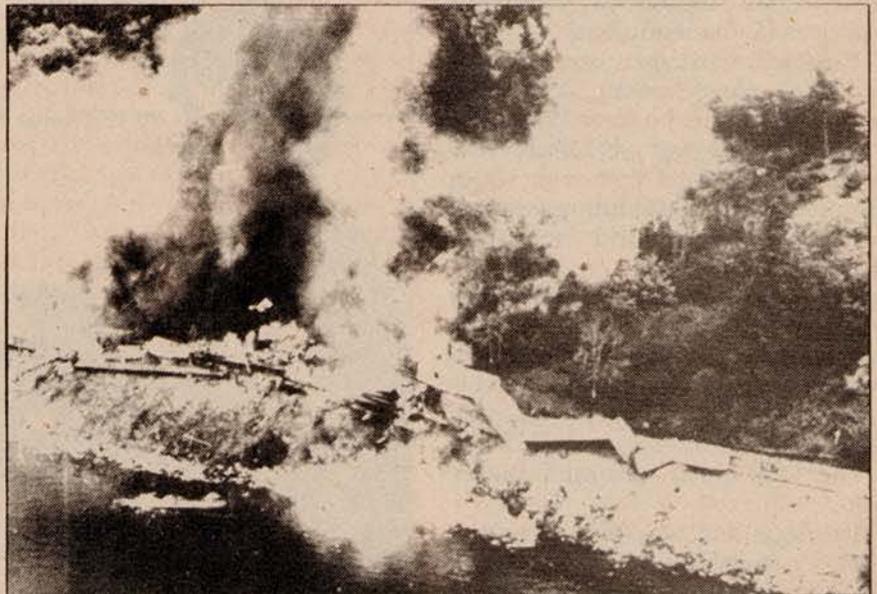


Photo by AP/Wide World

A Burlington Northern freight train carrying 192 pounds of "low-level" radioactive materials derailed on May 7 on the banks of the Columbia river about 20 miles east of Portland, Oregon. Two cars fell into the river, and 13 others—including the radioactive materials, which were in smoke detectors—burned.

Organizers Defeat DOE in Upstate New York

By Carol Mongerson

The Department of Energy (DOE) plan to bury more radioactive waste at West Valley, N.Y., has been blocked by citizens in a "David and Goliath" lawsuit. The Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes, joined by the Radioactive Waste Campaign, took the DOE to court last November on two counts.

First, the DOE planned to bury "low-level" waste at the West Valley site. Citizens' groups claimed the waste is actually transuranic*, not "low-level." Secondly, DOE rejected preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which, citizens say, is required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

In an out-of-court settlement, the

Carol Mongerson is a founder of the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes and vice-chair of the Campaign's board of directors.

Department of Energy agreed to do an EIS, and to extend the public comment period to six months. This EIS must take a careful look at the erosion potential of the site, a primary concern.

The Coalition and the Campaign hired a geology expert, Dr. Michael Wilson, who reviewed a number of geologic studies of the West Valley area, and concluded that it is a very high erosion area and that erosion rates have been underestimated by the DOE. In time, the entire site will erode away.

The DOE also agreed to apply to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for a ruling on whether the waste is properly classified as "low-level." This is an admission that the original plan to bury the wastes was illegal. By law, the waste must be considered transuranic unless NRC decides otherwise.

Citizens of western New York are jubilant over this settlement. Burial of the waste will, at the least, be delayed until the EIS is completed. Because of the EIS process, citizens will be able to argue for above ground, retrievable storage rather than burial.

David Seeger, the lawyer hired by the citizens, said the agreement is significant because "the technology used here will serve as the model for dozens of commercial radioactive landfills around the country. This is a test run for the nation."

Expressing the feelings of the small group of hardworking citizens who made the decision to sue the DOE, Seeger commented that the settlement was also encouraging because "it shows that the little guys can go up against City Hall and win."

**Regulations for storing transuranic wastes are much more stringent*

Compact/continued

advocate storage at reactors, recognize that such a study is critical if they are to ever reduce the volume of waste. Several of the compact's seven nuclear reactors already have on-site facilities which could store plant wastes for up to 15 years.

The formation of the citizen task force represented a major strategic turning point in the struggle. After June 9, the Central Interstate Commission will never again confront individuals motivated solely by self-interest. From that date forward, they will have to contend with united, informed persons whose resistance is organized, focused and determined. These people have decided that they will only go home when they know that all of their homes are secure.

At the June 9 meeting, the Compact Commission responded to increased citizen pressure by raising the stakes. The Commission agreed that any states that withdraw from the compact before the site is chosen have to pay the dues they would have had to pay had they stayed in, which amounts to \$25,000 per year.

The state would also have to pay the fees earmarked for the developer, about \$35,000 per reactor per year.

The Commission decided that there would be a penalty if a state's withdrawal caused the Compact to miss any of the deadlines in the compact schedule, such as the \$1 million rebate for choosing a developer and regional site by January 1, 1988. Furthermore, they rejected a proposal

"You could actually hug a barrel of radioactive waste and not be affected."

**Jim Simpson
Westinghouse engineer**

(made by the Kansas representatives) that would allow the state with the first dump to close its dump in case of an emergency.

Community activists find themselves countered by some heavy hitting pro-nuclear interests, a clear indication of how high the stakes are in this compact struggle. Westing-

house, for example, is projecting revenues of nearly \$800 million during the 30 years it would operate the site. US Ecology, allowing for inflation, projects about \$1.5 billion.

In early April, a Washington, D.C.-based speakers bureau, Energy America, sent two nuclear engineers to speak to citizen gatherings in Arkansas and Oklahoma. While they protested that their motives were educational, their talks were aimed at convincing a skeptical citizenry that nuclear waste—and leaking nuclear burial grounds—pose no health or environmental hazard.

Jim Simpson, an engineer from Westinghouse, told a Little Rock group that "you could actually hug a barrel of radioactive waste and not be affected."

"If you want to get technical about this," he said, "human bodies should have to be disposed of in [a "low-level" waste facility] because they're a lot more radioactive than a lot of the waste."

NOTE: At the June 29 meeting of the Central Interstate Compact Commission, US Ecology was chosen as the site developer.

Radscope

Nuclear Lake

A local advisory group has asked the National Park Service to drain a 50-acre lake near Pawling, N.Y., to determine if it was a dumping ground for radioactive waste.

The Nuclear Lake Management Committee, affiliated with the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council, also wants the Federal government to develop a proposal to tear down and dispose of contaminated buildings on the site.

For 14 years, Nuclear Lake—about 70 miles north of New York City—was the site of a nuclear fuel research and production facility operated by Gulf-United Nuclear Fuels Corporation. The plant closed in 1972, after a chemical explosion spewed plutonium dust through a laboratory, contaminating at least one worker.

Although the company said it removed all radioactivity before leaving the site, two years later the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) found that levels of plutonium remained. AEC officials, however, ruled that the amount of radioactivity did not pose a threat to the environment.

In 1979, the Park Service bought the 1,137-acre property, intending to divert the Appalachian Trail off highways into woodland near the lake.

About three miles of the trail was moved onto the property after the state Department of Environmental Conservation cleared it for "unrestricted use" in 1986.

But doubts about the property lingered. Townspeople told stories about waste dumping in the lake, now a popular fishing hole. To set the doubts to rest, a consultant was hired last year to determine if radioactivity remained on the site.

Oak Ridge Associated Universities, of Oak Ridge, Tenn., reported back to the local advisory group earlier this year that 41 metallic objects were detected in scans of the lake floor. In addition, the consultants found elevated levels of radioactivity in three of the buildings left on the property.

Reacting to the report, the local committee recommended in June that the Park Service drain the lake to examine the metal objects. Consultants admitted that it is likely there are more than 41 objects, since the scan sampled a grid, not the entire lake surface.

The committee also asked the Park Service to seal off the three contaminated buildings, and post warnings. The group asked Federal officials to remove and dispose of plutonium-tainted soil, as well as quantities of unknown types of chemicals disco-

vered in several of the buildings.

The committee also urged that notices be provided to warn hikers about the radiation studies and the dangers of the site.

Hare-Brained Pentagon Scheme Scrapped

The Pentagon plan to build several hundred small nuclear reactors which would provide emergency power during a protracted nuclear war has been cancelled.

In late May the Air Force shelved the Plan, according to an unnamed Air Force official, because of budgetary cutbacks.

The original story, which broke on March 30 in *The New York Times*, reported that an estimated 300 ten-megawatt reactors would be built at a cost of \$20 billion and take five years to complete.

The article also said the reactors would be transported by air around the country and overseas!

Government officials claimed the project was vital to the Reagan Administration's strategy for fighting a nuclear war. Because of anticipated opposition, "the Air Force had tried to keep the plan out of the public

Namibia/continued

importation of U-hex, reinforcing the loophole mentioned above;

2) an Interim rule, due to expire on July 1, 1987, allows for the importation of uranium ore and oxide under the condition that the importer must be under bond for processing and subsequent re-export of the material. This would legitimize import of Namibian ore into the U.S.—as long as it is enriched, made into fuel and re-exported out of the U.S.

As the Interim rule is about to expire, someone has encouraged workers in U.S. uranium enrichment plants to write to the Treasury Department requesting the interim regulations become final.

Jobs are at stake. The enrichment facilities in the U.S. are gaseous dif-

fusion plants involving a costly, out-of-date technology. This technology uses ten times as much electricity as newer gas centrifuge plants in Europe.

Already one of the three gaseous diffusion facilities in the U.S.—the Oak Ridge plant—has closed down due to competition from the newer European outfits. Without long standing contracts, some of which involve Namibian ore on its way to Japan, the U.S. enrichment plants could not survive.

In the current controversy, unfortunately, workers at the U.S. enrichment plants are being pitted against workers in the mines in Namibia who, under the Apartheid system, work at scandalously low wages and under poor health conditions.

The posture of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is less clear.

Since the Anti-Apartheid bill became law, eight license applications have been made to the agency to import South African ore.

No action has yet been taken on the applications but several anti-apartheid groups such as Washington Office on Africa, Trans-Africa, American Committee on Africa as well as the Nuclear Control Institute have petitioned the NRC requesting a hearing on the applications.

Why the NRC should entertain applications at all for something that, supposedly, has been banned by the U.S. Congress is a good question.

If readers of *the Waste Paper* wish to learn more about the Namibian ore problem or wish to volunteer on a Namibian Task Force which the Radioactive Waste Campaign is setting up, please call (212) 473-7390.

eye," according to *The Times*.

In a June 16 telephone interview, the above unnamed Air Force spokesperson told the Radioactive Waste Campaign that *The Times* article was mistaken on at least two points. The plan was not for hundreds of reactors, but just five or so. And there never was any intention to make the reactors portable.

Withdrawal From Compact Gains in NC Statehouse

Since the end of June, a bill introduced in the North Carolina House of Representatives calling for withdrawal from the Southeast Compact has been gaining steady support.

This bill also advocates the use of nuclear power plant sites for the storage of "low-level" waste. Furthermore, generators are called on to show that they have used waste reduction techniques before they can have access to the waste facilities.

On July 1, the NC House Water and Air Committee favorably sent the bill to the House Floor.

The legislation is being opposed by the predominantly urban counties where the reactors are located. However, these legislators do not make up the majority and can be easily outvoted by the rural counties.

Converting Civilian Reactors Into Bomb Factories

The Department of Energy (DOE) is considering converting the abandoned Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS, or "woops!" to its critics) civilian nuclear reactor to military use.

According to the *Washington Post* ("Weekly Edition," March 9, 1987), the DOE released a study to Congress on February 19 saying that it would take six years and \$1.6 billion to convert the unfinished plant into a production reactor making plutonium and tritium for nuclear weapons.

Congressional critics claim that turning civilian reactors into bomb factories calls into question the Reagan Administration's commitment to nonproliferation.

However, DOE spokesperson Anson Franklin was quoted as saying that converting the reactor would not violate any treaty. Franklin reasons that it was never a civilian reactor because it was never put into service.

In a telephone interview with the Campaign on June 18, Phil Keis of the DOE press office reported that although conversion is still an option, building two new production reactors in South Carolina is now more likely. Asked what would happen to

the unfinished reactor in Washington State, Keis replied "that's WPPSS' problem."

DOE Report Confirms Campaign's Fernald Findings

In March of this year the Department of Energy (DOE) issued an environmental survey report on the Feed Materials Production Center in Fernald, Ohio, citing "potential uranium contamination [in the deep aquifer] east and southeast of the site." The findings were based on "uranium levels in groundwater samples above background concentrations."

This confirms the Radioactive Waste Campaign's August 16, 1986, report on Fernald which concluded that the increase in uranium concentrations at a well due east of the site must have been contaminated by the Waste Pits on the Fernald site two miles away.

This is particularly disturbing because the contaminated well is near the Southwest Ohio well field, which draws on the Great Miami aquifer for drinking water. The Waste Pits contain over 11 million pounds of uranium. The Campaign has called for exhuming this waste and storing it above ground.

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Now, more than ever, we need your support. Please become a member of the Radioactive Waste Campaign, and join us and citizens worldwide in the battle to stop generating nuclear waste. All members will receive an annual subscription to *the Waste Paper*. Founding Members will additionally receive our deepest gratitude and a commemorative gift on our first anniversary.

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Montclair "Rad Dirt" Update

By William McDonnell

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) came up with still one more unworkable plan to get rid of the radioactive dirt in Essex County, New Jersey.

After announcing to Jackson Township on June 5 that it had been chosen as a site, the DEP two days later sent 50 trucks of gravel, a bulldozer and a steam roller into the wildlife area to prepare the roads. The trucks were blocked by 100 people. Two were arrested. The fight was on.

Now there are court proceedings pending. The state has been at least temporarily stopped from storing the soil at Jackson Township. The U.S. Interior Secretary, Donald Hodel, has stated that the plan violates Federal and state Pinelands agreements. And once again the DEP has bungled its attempt to dispose of the soil. This time only 15,000 barrels. This time only temporary storage.

How did the Department of Environmental Protection fail? They failed the same way they have repeatedly failed in the past—they ignored the people.

William McDonnell is an activist in Warwick Against Radioactive Dump, and is a researcher for the Radioactive Waste Campaign.

When the Department tried to transfer the dirt to Nevada the plan might have worked, except for one thing. They were going to transfer the dirt from train to truck in *down-town Las Vegas*, three blocks behind one of the major casinos. Naturally, the local population was upset.

In Washington State, the DEP tried to dump the radioactive soil into a quarry already leaking radioactive

*The trucks were blocked
by 100 people.*

wastes, near an Indian reservation. The public was incensed.

In Vernon, N.J., (near the New York border) the DEP chose a spot over a major waste supply, an area with significant runoff going into crop and dairy farmland. Here they proposed to use an untested, experimental, irreversible process to dump the dirt. The citizens on both sides of the border fought a fierce five-month battle and won.

In Ogdensburg the mayor recently discussed taking the dirt temporarily for a \$6 million settlement from New Jersey. But a few days later, when the people in his town found out about

the plan, and protested with all-night vigils and demonstrations, the mayor stopped the negotiations.

And now Jackson Township.

And what about the residents of Montclair? They still live in contaminated houses, some with lead blankets to shield them from the radiation. Has the Department of Environmental Protection done everything it can do to alleviate the health effects on those residents of the radon in their air, and the radium and thorium and uranium and who knows what else in their soil? Has the Department protected the people first?

And what about Jackson Township? Next to the proposed site is a highly contaminated area where a nuclear warhead was destroyed during a Bomarc missile explosion and fire in 1960. What has the DEP done to assist the Department of Defense in cleaning up this mess? Why has the DEP refused to store the Montclair contaminated soil at the missile site and instead picked an uncontaminated site next door in the Pinelands?

Certainly, until the Department of Environmental Protection develops a more respectful attitude towards communities which might be potential future storage sites, the radium contaminated soil is going nowhere.

Radioactive Waste Campaign
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New York, NY 10012

