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P.O. Box 162
Wycombe, PA., 18980
May 23, 2000

Director
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland, 20852

Dear Sir:

It is with amazement and dismay that I read the enclosed article about the use of recycled radioactively contaminated scrap metal in car parts, cookware, medical devices, and toys. I have already written to my Congressman and General Motors about this matter, and now I am writing to you to ask for an explanation of what is happening, why this has happened, and what potential and/or actual dangers such a practice poses for consumers. I am awaiting your response. Thank you.

Yours truly,

Katherine R. Bartholomew, Ph.D.

Dr. Katherine Rankin Bartholomew



About NRDC

NRDC is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the world's natural resources and ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all people. With 400,000 members, a staff of lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists, NRDC combines the power of law, the power of science, and the power of people in defense of the environment.

Editorial Purpose

The Amicus Journal is a quarterly of thought and opinion for the general public on environmental affairs, particularly those relating to policies of national and international significance. In keeping with NRDC's program of public interest advocacy and its efforts to educate the public about environmental protection, this magazine offers essays, news analyses, features, profiles, reviews and poetry. It also integrates news about NRDC, its staff, and their work, with news about the environmental movement as a whole, to stimulate a creative exchange of ideas. **The Amicus Journal** is open to diverse points of view and beliefs. All opinions and views expressed in its pages (except those devoted to NRDC) by contributors and the editor are their own and not necessarily those of NRDC.

Amicus

Amicus (ə-mĭ-cŭs) is Latin for "friend." Its most common usage is in the phrase amicus curiae, meaning "friend of the court," an outside party who can comment on a lawsuit. NRDC has played this role on many occasions as an advocate for the environment.

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⊕ **The Amicus Journal** is printed with vegetable-based inks on 100 percent recycled paper that is processed without chlorine. Text (75 percent post-consumer content) and cover (50 percent post-consumer content) stocks are made by New Leaf Paper of San Francisco, California. Below is a quarterly status report on the resources we have saved in the current issue and since we began using this paper in the Fall 1997 *Amicus*.

current	17,900 gal. water	23,300 kwh electricity	130 lbs. air pollution	180 fully grown trees
to date	2,405,100 gal. total	1,661,300 kwh total	24,030 lbs. total	6,980 trees total

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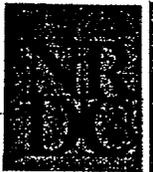
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and fossil-fuel electricity providers who might be looking to stretch the truth as they compete with alternative energy companies in the newly competitive electricity market.

Russia's dirty little secrets

Highly enriched uranium, anyone?

Encircled by double fences and guarded by military troops, Russia's ten "secret cities" are massive Soviet-era nuclear weapons installations that still employ and house tens of thousands of people. Shrouded in secrecy, these closed cities are responsible for the security of hundreds of tons of highly enriched uranium and plutonium and pose a serious threat to public health and the environment.

NRDC scientists Tom Cochran and Robert S. Norris, along with co-author Oleg Bukharin, throw new light on the

subject in their new report, *New Perspectives on Russia's Ten Secret Cities*. The report includes never-before released U.S. government spy satellite imagery of these fortified installations. "What transpires in these cities constitutes a global security concern of the first magnitude," says Norris.

Recycling radiation

Rack-and-pinion steering, leather upholstery ... and radioactive waste? Not what you would order up in your new car, but that may well be what you are getting.

Astonishingly, the Department of Energy (DOE) is subsidizing the recycling of thousands of tons of radioactively contaminated scrap metal from a former nuclear weapons plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Since October 1998, DOE has been paying BNFL to recycle and sell radioactive scrap metal for use not just

in car parts but also in cookware, medical devices, and even children's toys.

Meanwhile, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is trying to establish standards that would set allowable radiation levels for recycled radioactive waste. Given the toxicity of even low-level radiation and the difficulties inherent in measuring radioactivity in these materials, NRDC and other groups are urging the NRC to reconsider setting standards due to the serious risk to public health.

Contact the NRC and express your opinion: Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852; phone: 800-368-5642; fax: 301-415-1672; e-mail: opa@nrc.gov.

War games

Horrifying as the question is, it is useful to know the answer: What if we found ourselves in the midst of nuclear war? Last year, NRDC wrote a new nuclear conflict simulation software that allows one to peek into a nuclear future with gruesome accuracy. Assisting *Wall Street Journal* reporter Carla Robbins on an article about the U.S. Trident Treaty, NRDC scientist Matthew McKinzie was able to determine that an attack from a single Trident II submarine on a missile field near Moscow would leave 850,000 people dead from blast, fire, and radiation. Other data from NRDC's program have appeared on the

NBC Nightly News, as well as in *Time*. "We are eight years beyond the Cold War, and the United States and Russia still deploy more than 13,000 nuclear weapons combined," notes McKinzie.

Breaking the silence

During the Cold War, the United States deployed thousands of nuclear weapons around the world, according to an article co-authored by NRDC policy analyst Robert S. Norris. The November/December cover story in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, "Where They Were," reveals, for the first time, the locations of U.S. nuclear weapons based abroad from 1945 to 1977.

Norris, along with authors William M. Arkin and William Burr, used documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act to delve into one of the government's most closely guarded secrets. The article's revelations created a stir in newspapers around the world. "This document pierces only part of the heavy veil of nuclear secrecy," the article concludes. "It may take decades before the full story of U.S. nuclear deployments is told."



Celebrate National TV-Turnoff Week from April 24-30. Reconnect with your family and community, exercise, read, and take part in many of the fun and educational activities that television too often forces out. For information, call TV-Free America at 800-939-6737 or visit www.tvfa.org.

