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To: <secy@nrc.gov>
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Subject: proposed rulemaking

May 30, 2003 (8:02AM)

OFFICE OF SECRETARY
RULEMAKINGS AND
ADJUDICATIONS STAFF

Dear Sirs:

I am writing as a concerned citizen regarding the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's proposed rulemaking that would lead to deregulation of radioactive contaminated waste from nuclear power plants and the weapons industry.

All nuclear waste needs to be handled responsibly, and the public needs to be protected from the health hazards associated with it. The proposed rulemaking published in the Federal Register on February 28, 2003 attempts to downplay the hazards surrounding the nuclear waste materials in question.

The idea of saving lots of money on waste disposal comes at too high a price--human life. The NRC should remember that what goes around comes around. How would the folks who drafted this proposal like it if they and their families all came down with cancer (God forbid!!) and then subsequently found out that their cars, their new homes, and many of the everyday household items they used were manufactured with the recycled radioactive materials that they had helped to unleash into the consumer market?

There are no safe limits for exposure to ionizing radiation, and the long-term effects are immeasurable. However, it is well known that radiation causes cancer and genetic mutations. There is no responsible way to regulate release of nuclear waste for recycling, and the NRC does not have any reasonable plan that would or could make such a proposal safe for the public. All nuclear waste materials must be contained and isolated from our environment!

No one wants nuclear waste in the everyday items they use or in their local landfill. We already live in an overly-polluted world, and any proposal to deregulate nuclear waste only further threatens our health and the health of future generations.

The United States needs to become the environmental leader of the world. We do not want nuclear waste in our landfills; we do not want it in our public places; and we certainly do not want it in our homes or in the everyday items that we purchase.

We do want clean, renewable sources of energy, and we would very much appreciate it if the NRC would fulfill its role as protector of the public health by focusing on proper containment and isolation of deadly nuclear waste materials. When it comes to nuclear waste, we need tighter regulation--not deregulation.

I know the challenges are immense, but I also believe that with ongoing research and application of good ideas, the problems can be overcome. Even if or when we enter an age of world-wide reliance on renewable sources of energy, the role of the NRC will be an ongoing one for as long as nuclear waste remains radioactive--and we all know that is a very long, long time. When looking for ways to organize efforts and/or re-direct, the NRC should be as far-sighted as is humanly possible while remembering that one of its primary functions is to protect the public health.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. It is my sincere hope that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will take all the risks into consideration and abandon the reckless idea of recycling waste materials from the nuclear industry into consumer goods.

God bless and protect us all in Jesus' name.

Elizabeth Robinson

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