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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

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TO: Mr. Robert E. Browning, Director
FROM: Paul T. Prestholt, Sr. OR - NNWSI
DATE: July 16, 1986
SUBJECT: Newspaper Articles

Please find attached the most recent articles that have appeared in our local newspapers. Again, I believe you will find them of interest.

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Attachments

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WM Record File:

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WM Project

Docket No.

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LAS VEGAS SUN

Friday, July 11, 1986

Beltway proposed for nuke waste route

By JUDY CARLOS
SUN Staff Writer

Las Vegas Councilman Ron Lurie, chairman of the Regional Transportation Commission, said Thursday funds from the Department of Energy should be requested to build a belt roadway system around the valley for traffic to a proposed nuclear repository.

He said Las Vegas roads are not adequate to carry the truckloads of high-level nuclear waste bound for Yucca Flat, should the Nevada site be selected as the nation's nuclear dump.

Lurie said the DOE should pay for the design and building.

Under federal law high-level nuclear waste can only be transported on federally supported highways, and not on local roads. That would make Interstate 15, as it presently is designed, the only available highway for such transport and it goes through the middle of the city and highly populated neighborhoods.

Although a full board was not present on Thursday when he proposed that a resolution be sent the DOE, the majority who were present appeared to approve the idea.

Lurie said he had been studying DOE regulations closely and that there is no way in which the road system in the valley could be considered "adequate" under federal standards. He urged the cities and Clark County to send similar resolutions.

Las Vegas Councilman Al Levy said one route the DOE and local entities should consider would be a beltline linking the east leg of the freeway on the southeast to the north and the Salt Lake Highway in a line generally parallel to Lamb Boulevard at the east side of the valley.


Lurie said there are no funds for local entities to build the extensive road network needed, and the federal agency would be the only one with the funds to do the job.

In other RTC action, the board delayed a decision on the allocation of \$1.7 million for construction and engineering of Pecos Road between Cheyenne Avenue and Craig Road when Las Vegas councilmen said they had questions to ask the representatives of North Las Vegas about the project.

Lurie and Levy said Las Vegas not only built its portion of the road, but added full improvements including lighting and curb and gutter, and they were concerned that there were no provisions to finish off the North Las Vegas end of the project in the same manner.

Neither the North Las Vegas city engineer or council representative were present to explain why the city chose to go ahead with Pecos as it has. Lurie said a failure to make both stretches of the road uniform "defeats all we are trying to do here. We are, after all, a regional board."

LAS VEGAS SUN



Saturday

Home July 12, 1986

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Nevada's Largest Morning Newspaper

Nevada panel asks U.S. to rethink nuke dump site pick

RENO (UPI) — A resolution calling on Congress to halt the program to select a site for high-level radioactive burial grounds was adopted Friday by the Nevada Nuclear Projects Commission.

The resolution suggests the Energy Department start all over in looking for a national site, including some of those states that have been discarded.

The resolution is similar to ones already adopted by the Western Governors Association, the Western Attorneys General Association and a working group of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The Energy Department named Nevada, Washington and Texas as the three finalists in the search for the nation's first high-level nuclear dump. The department then scrapped plans to search for a second site in the east of midwest to use when the first burial grounds is filled.

After hearing presentations from Texas and Washington officials,

Commission Chairman Grant Sawyer, former Nevada governor, and Las Vegas City Councilman Ron Lurie said Nevada would probably be boosted to the position of top choice, because of problems in the other states.

Steve Frishman, executive director of the Texas Nuclear Waste Office, said the nine-square mile site in Deaf Smith County was privately owned and was prime agriculture land. He said the Energy Department has not yet received permission from any of the farmers to begin testing and he said the federal agency would have to either buy the site or condemn the land. There is a fear the nuclear waste might contaminate the underground water system.

Terry Hussman of the Washington Nuclear Waste Management Office said the proposed site at Hanford would be the "least safe" and the most costly to develop. Hussman said there has already been

considerable leakage of liquid waste of tanks dating back to the Manhattan Project 40 years ago. He said some possibly could seep into the Columbia River which he described as a "national resource."

Bob Fulkerson, director of Citizen Alert and Abby Johnson of the League of Women Voters offered similar resolutions asking Congress to withhold funds on the budget of the Department of Energy for site selection activities. They said a house budget committee had already done this when the department abandoned its search for the second locations.

Fulkerson suggested the commission use the position of Sen. Paul Laxalt, R-Nev., a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, for leverage in blocking funds for the Energy Department's studies.

Sawyer said the commission could not take action on the suggested resolution immediately but added Fulkerson should send a copy to Sen. Chic Hecht, R-Nev.

Assemblyman Jane Ham, R-Las Vegas, reported to the commission on the meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures group in Denver this week in which states accused the Energy Department of making a political decision to avoid pressure from the populous east coast states.

These legislators said the Energy Department broke faith with the congressmen who passed the Nuclear Waste Policy act of 1982. That act clearly requires two repositories with the aim of attaining equity between east and west.

Deputy Attorney General Harry Swainston, adviser to the state Nuclear Waste Project Office, reviewed the five suits Nevada filed May 28 shortly after Energy Secretary John Herrington announced an indefinite postponement in the search for a second repository and recommending Nevada, Washington and Texas undergo further studies.

Swainston said one suit seeks to collect money from the federal agency for the suits Nevada has been forced to bring. He said these legal costs should be borne by the federal government and not come out of the pockets of the states.

Sawyer said: "Our position is that we are going to insist every matter in contention be determined. We simply can't let DOE's position deter us from protecting ourselves under the act."

"We can't let DOE make the decision and if that breaks the state of Nevada, that's too bad. We aren't going to settle for that. We intend to litigate every matter that is valid," said Sawyer.

Saturday, July 12, 1968

LAS VEGAS SUN -3B

DOE played politics with dump, Texan charges

By CY RYAN

United Press International

RENO — A Texas official Friday suggested the Energy Department played politics involving this year's election in its decision to abandon study of potential high level nuclear dumps in the Eastern and Midwestern states.

Steve Frishman, executive director of the Texas Department of Nuclear Waste, said the decision by the DOE would bear on congressional races in those states.

Terry Hussman, executive director of the Washington Office of Nuclear Waste Management, said the stoppage of studies of a possible second site was a violation of the federal law. He said he thinks a suit against the federal agency will be successful.

Texas, Nevada and Washington have been selected as the three primary candidates for the radioactive burial grounds. The Energy Department had also planned to embark on finding a second site in the midwest or east to use after the first site is filled. But then the agency dropped its plans.

Frishman, appearing before the Nevada Nuclear Projects Commission, said, "It was a political decision." He agreed with a suggestion by Commission Chairman Grant Sawyer of Las Vegas that the elimination of those potential sites will relieve Republican candidates in those states of having to deal with the issue.

Sawyer said Benjamin Rusche of the federal nuclear waste office had appeared before the Nevada commission only days before, giving assurances that studies for a second site in the east or midwest would be pursued. Then the agency dropped its plans.

Frishman said, "I smelled a rat from the beginning." He said the department's plan was to "create a fear and then let it go away." The Energy Department, he said, has never been greatly interested in a second site.

An "electric fence" has been built around the proposed Texas site in Deaf Smith County, said Frishman. The nine-square miles is among the best agricultural land in Texas and is all privately owned. The federal agency, he

said, has not gained access from the farmers to "turn one shovel of dirt."

So far the Energy Department has not been able to start its testing. The major fear in Texas, said Frishman, is that the burial of the radioactive waste would contaminate the underground water Texas relies on for its farming.

Sawyer questioned how Texas got on the original list of nominees since there had not been any preliminary studies that pinpointed that site. In contrast, Sawyer said the Energy Department has been studying Yucca Mountain in Nevada for 10 years.

Frishman said Texas officials were wondering that, too. He said Texas has continually raised the issue and has never gotten an answer from the Energy Department.

Hussman said the proposed site at Hanford, Wash., was the "least safe of all" and would also be the costliest to develop. Hussman said the federal law should be amended and the process of selection started over again.

FINAL

LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Saturday, July 12, 1986

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Suitability of nuke waste sites in question

By Dorothy Kosich
Review-Journal Capital Bureau

CARSON CITY—A theory emerged Friday during a meeting of Nevada's Commission on Nuclear Projects that the U.S. Department of Energy may have deliberately selected two environmentally unsafe sites for the nation's first high-level nuclear waste repository, in order to force the repository into Nevada.

In addition, representatives of nuclear waste agencies of Texas and Washington said there's virtually no possibility Congress would honor Nevada's veto of Yucca Mountain as a high-level repository.

Steve Frishman, director of the Texas Nuclear Waste Program, and Terry Husseman, director of Washington's Office of Nuclear Waste Management, discussed the environmental unsuitability of proposed repository sites in their states with the Commission on Nuclear Projects.

The two men also suggested no state will be able to stop Congress from overriding a state's decision not to accept a high-level nuclear waste repository.

During questioning by Grant Sawyer, chairman of the Commission on Nuclear Projects, both Frishman and Husseman said they were amazed that the DOE had selected sites.

Please see NUKE/4A

Nuke

From 1A

within their states which were extremely environmentally unsafe for storing high-level waste.

Frishman said no one from the Department of Energy has been able to conduct tests at the farmland in the Texas Panhandle being considered as one of three sites for the nation's repository. The two other sites are Hanford, Wash., and Yucca Mountain in Nevada.

Frishman said the private landowners in the heavily agricultural area refused to allow DOE personnel onto their property. Therefore, he said, "no DOE researcher has ever put his foot on those nine square miles" which the DOE said is suitable for the storage of high-level waste.

The state is already embroiled in a court battle involving the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regarding what Frishman called "the great potential for damage to agricultural products." That environmental damage could occur, he said, because the ground water used for irrigation in the farm area could be polluted by nuclear waste if a repository were located there.

Frishman said no farmer in the area will agree to selling his land to the federal government for the project, which would force "a major condemnation effort on the part of the federal government on some of the best farmland in the state of Texas."

Husseman said 53 million gallons of high-level radioactive waste has been temporarily stored during the past 40 years in Hanford.

So far, 500,000 gallons of the stuff has leaked from the storage tanks into the ground located only a few miles from the Columbia River, he said.

Husseman said Washington, neighboring Oregon and three Indian tribes are researching 19,000 pages of previously classified materials detailing leaks of nuclear waste into the environment at Hanford.

He said the main concern of locating a high-level repository at Han-

Resolution approved

RENO — The Nevada Commission on Nuclear Projects on Friday approved a resolution demanding the suspension of all work by the U.S. Department of Energy on a high-level nuclear waste repository.

The resolution urges Congress and the president to suspend the siting and development of the first repository for high-level nuclear waste until work on a second repository outside the West is recommended.

Or, the resolution suggested, Congress and the president should reconsider their decision to recommend or approve three sites in the West, and instead begin a national search for the best available single site.

The document accused the secretary of the Energy Department of being "arbitrary and capricious" and of deliberately violating the Nuclear Waste Policy Act when he postponed all site specific work on a second repository May 28.

The act mandated the selection of more than one repository to be located in various regions of the nation to avoid placing the repository burden on a single area.

"The Nevada Commission on Nuclear Projects finds the secretary's decision to be a blatant breach of faith with the Congress, and with the Western states, and to constitute a total disregard by the secretary of any fundamental concept of regional equity," the resolution said.

The resolution will be sent to the president, Congress, the governors of the Western states, the attorneys general of those states, and the chairman of the Nevada Legislature's High-Level Waste Study Committee.

The commission is a citizens' study group that is making recommendations to Nevada's governor about the location of a repository at Nevada's Yucca Mountain.

ford is that water is running through the site only 3,000 feet underground.

In selecting Hanford as a possible site, he added, the DOE "picked the most costly and least safe" of all potential repository sites.

Frishman said Texas feels another repository location within the state where underground water supplies would not be endangered may be more feasible than the Panhandle. But, he added, "we're not going to suggest a site."

During one point in the discussion, Sawyer theorized on a related matter regarding why the secretary of the Energy Department delayed the process for considering a site for a second high-level repository in another region outside the West.

Both Frishman and Nevada's executive director of the Agency for Nuclear Projects, Robert Loux, said the decision not to select a second site eliminated the need for members of Congress in states other than Washington, Nevada and Texas to

discuss the possibility of placing a high-level repository in their areas.

By delaying the decision, Frishman and Loux said, it relieved "a great deal of political pressures" on the re-election campaigns of a number of U.S. senators and representatives.

That reluctance to confront the nuclear waste issue may also affect whether Congress would respect a decision by Nevada's governor and the Legislature not to accept a repository.

"Is it realistic to believe that congressman from other states will concur with Nevada's refusal to accept waste and place their own states into consideration?" Sawyer asked.

"The outcome will have little to do with nuclear waste," Frishman replied.

Sawyer said he feels "we have to be smart and be tough" in developing strategy to beat the DOE, including the effective use of litigation.

4B/Las Vegas Review-Journal/Saturday, July 12, 1986

DOE reroutes waste from West Coast

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The U.S. Department of Energy has, for now, rerouted controversial nuclear fuel waste from a Taiwanese reactor away from the West Coast, officials say.

But the federal agency made clear it hasn't abandoned its efforts to bring the fuel to the West Coast, then truck it cross-country to the DOE's Savannah River Plant in South Carolina, where it can be reclaimed for use in nuclear weapons.

The first shipment of 48 spent nuclear fuel rods already is at sea, and

officials have rerouted it to arrive in Portsmouth, Va., sometime in August, then be taken to the Savannah facility, DOE spokesman Jack Vandenberg said Thursday.

"At this point, they (DOE officials) have made that decision only in regard to the one shipment," he said. "The routing for future shipments will be decided on a case-by-case basis."

Destination of 17 future shipments will be decided as each shipment is ready to leave port, said DOE spokesman David Devane.

"The decision makes perfect sense," said Jim Kneeland, spokesman for Washington Gov. Booth Gardner. "The safest thing to do is to handle the waste the least and expose the least amount of people to a potential accident."

"That means not unloading it on a West Coast port and putting it on a truck or train and transporting it across the country."

"We hope this position is an indication of a little more sensitivity and awareness of public attitude from the department," Kneeland said. "From

what I've learned about the DOE, this is a total victory for the day."

A March 27 Nuclear Regulatory Commission report said the DOE wanted to route nuclear waste from Taiwan through the West Coast.

"Still keeping the hammer to our head, are they?" said James McJunkin, executive director of the Port of Long Beach. "I think we've made our position very clear — that over our dead bodies will they bring it in here."

Insight

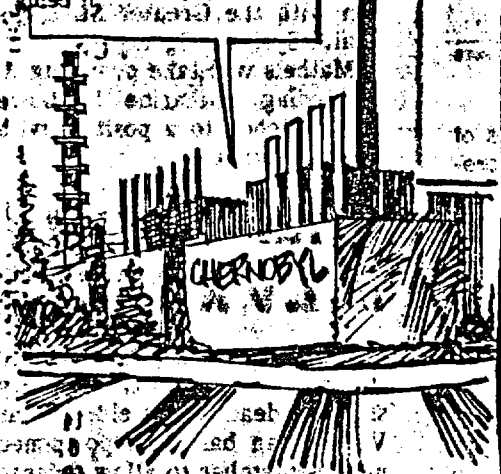
TRUST ME,
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A lethal accident waiting to happen

Bhopal. Chernobyl. Bayonne, N.J. Three Mile Island. Miamisburg, Ohio. These are places etched in the public's mind after toxic accidents.

As long as man needs and uses chemicals and nuclear power, there will be accidents. The more dangerous liquids, gases and solids are used and moved around this country and the world, the more accidents will happen.

In April, the Soviet Union's Chernobyl nuclear power reactor disaster spread a radioactive cloud around the world. Last week in Bayonne, N.J., a gasoline mixing tank exploded, spawning a massive fire. A train loaded with phosphoric acid derailed in Miamisburg and spewed a poisonous cloud that forced evacuation for more than 17,000 people.

Once toxic or radioactive materials accidentally spill onto the earth, man cannot easily stuff that chemical-nuclear genie back into its bottle.

How good are the rules?

Congress has launched an investigation into federal and state rules regulating shipments of hazardous materials. Some of the findings are appalling: no national driver training or regulations, a hodgepodge of different requirements from state to state, often no emergency plans for cleanup.

Concerns by Nevada's officials with hazardous cargoes rolling a stone's throw away from 15 million residents and visitors alike has mirrored the national feeling of unease.

The Bureau of Reclamation has been petitioning Congress for nearly 20 years for another bridge across the Colorado River for extremely dangerous truckloads of gasoline, chemicals and nuclear wastes.

The two-lane scenic route over Hoover Dam is an accident waiting to happen, those federal officials keep saying.

Our Regional Transportation Commission Chairman Ron Lurie demanded last week that the government build a freeway of its own, bypassing Las Vegas, if Yucca Mountain becomes the nation's first and maybe only high-level nuclear waste dump. Better yet, somebody in Washington, D.C., should listen to Gov. Richard Bryan and Rep. Harry Reid, who say the whole idea of Nevada becoming a nuclear dump is outrageous. Why, they ask, did the government encourage nuclear power if it didn't plan on recycling that potentially valuable waste?

On-site recycling

Instead of shipping tired radioactive fuel across the country to a hole in the ground, keep it near those eastern and midwestern reactors. Clean it up and use it again, or bury it close to home where minimal added danger results from transporting it over long distances to Nevada.

The Department of Energy boasts of its 30-year record for transporting nuclear materials shuttled back and forth across the country. Records always look good when there isn't much of that dangerous thing out there. Once a nuclear dump opens, those shipments jump 100 times or more each year, with an astronomical leap in accident potential.

It's simple. The more chemicals and nuclear wastes joining people on the nation's highways, the more accidents will happen.

DOE and the Department of Transportation need to take a long look at shipping rules for hazardous and nuclear wastes. That means possible driver training and licensing, as well as better rules for the road.

Maybe it's time for a long pause before the next dangerous truck or trainload of hazardous stuff leaves the yard. Maybe it's time Congress stopped all that hurrying to bury nuclear wastes in somebody else's backyard.

Giving itself is a risky business. Businesses and government don't need to boost the odds against survival.

Tuesday, July 15, 1986

Group files nuclear dump suit

PORTLAND, Ore. (UPI) — The Coalition for Safe Power has filed a federal lawsuit challenging the U.S. Department of Energy's selection of three sites in the West as finalists for the nation's first high-level nuclear waste dump.

The suit asks the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to "throw out all work done to date by the U.S. DOE and force the agency to adhere to the letter and spirit of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act," Nina Bell, executive director of the coalition, said Monday.

Bell said the suit seeks to force the DOE to reinstate the site selection process for a second nuclear waste repository east of the Rockies, in addition to challenging the agency's nomination of sites at Hanford, Wash., Yucca Mountain, Nev., and Deaf Smith County, Texas for the first repository.

"While we firmly believe — and the evidence supports us — that Hanford is the worst possible site from a technical standpoint to bury the country's commercial nuclear waste, our lawsuit seeks to have the DOE's recommendation of sites in Nevada and Texas overturned too," Bell said.

"All Western states have been a victim of DOE's political and illegal manipulation of the site selection process," she claimed.

"It is important that the people of the Northwest not rely solely on the states of Washington and Oregon to protect their interests concerning Hanford," Bell said.

Michael Rose, a Portland

attorney representing the coalition, said, "The people who are going to be affected need to have this kind of input into the judicial

review process. We can't afford to wait for the state of Oregon to decide what to do and which interests to protect."