/860606/artcls. 3/Browning/LV

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

Reply to:
1050 East Flamingo Rd.
Suite 319
Las Vegas, Nevada 89114
Tel: (702) 388-6125
FTS: 598-6125

'86 JUN 10 P12:46

TO: Mr. Robert E. Browning, Director

FROM: Paul T. Prestholt, Sr. OR - NNWSI PTP

DATE: June 6, 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.

PTP:nan

Attachments

8905240384 860606
PDR WASTE
WM11 PDR

WM Record File 102

WM Project
Docket No.
PDR
LPDR

Distribution:
REB MJB Stablein
Linehan
(Return to WM, 623-SS) Sac

998

57

LAS VEGAS SUN

Friday

Home June 6, 1986

Nevada's Largest Morning Newspaper

Where I Stand

By Hank Greenspun

Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust and garbage to garbage.

It is an old prayer with some poetic license but it smells of death, and if there is enough garbage dumped on us, death is inevitable.

It appears it has become a popular theme among political figures to single out Nevada as a "dumping ground" for anything undesirable. The latest suggestion coming from New York City Mayor Ed Koch would set up a "barbed wire tent camp in the Nevada Flats" to be inhabited by drug dealers.

Just last week President Ronald Reagan practically told the nation that Nevada is the most popular and final choice for the high level nuclear dump — a place to store tons and tons of spent nuclear waste that has been piling up for years at the nation's nuclear plants.

Some years ago, I recall the mayor of San Francisco suggesting that California's excess garbage could be dumped into the mine pits of Nevada.

To be popular with the voters in their own states every political office-holder is selecting Nevada as the final resting place for anything they want to be rid of and which could make Nevada a final resting place for all human, plant and animal garbage.

There is an old world expression that on somebody else's backside it's easy to whack.

Nevada seems to be getting it on all sides because we are an easy target. No one complains or raises the devil about anything. Of course, this newspaper hollers and moans and once in awhile gets a little assist from elected officials; but when big guns have to be called into play, somehow, somewhere, the guns are spiked.

Rep. James Weaver of Oregon introduced a bill in Congress directing the Department of Energy to delete Hanford Nuclear Reservation from the list of possible sites for the nation's high level nuke waste dump.

He was supported by eight other western congressmen, all of

(See WHERE I STAND, Page 2A)

Where I Stand

Hank Greenspun

(Continued from Page 1A)

whom signed as co-sponsors. This is known as affirmative action. Someone took a stand in a constructive way and said, "take your dumping elsewhere."

Where was our congressional delegation when affirmative action is needed? All we get are press releases from press staffs, mumbling, tumbling and double-talking.

We hear words from our delegation that it is "the patriotic thing to do," or "let's wait till all the facts are in," or "there's still no documentation that it is harmful," or a thousand and one different vacillations and procrastinations.

It's enough to make a fellow sick with all the political folderol that passes as representation of the citizens of Nevada.

Instead of lessons in patriotism and duty to the country, we would prefer our representatives and senators to protect us from the destruction of our environment, water, agricultural lands and the health and welfare of our citizens.

Many tourists pick Las Vegas as a place to enjoy the environment, relax and have fun, but evidently many of our elected officials would prefer Nevada as a dumping ground.

We don't want a concentration camp for drug pushers and we don't need nuclear garbage from other areas.

There are plenty of places back east for dumping everything from drug pushers to garbage. The Kentucky Caverns, the Salt Domes in Louisiana and other areas carved out by nature would make ideal places to throw human or nuclear garbage.

If our senatorial delegation wants to follow the lead of the congressman from Oregon, let them introduce a bill giving potent reasons why Nevada is not an acceptable site.

The bill could explain that it is stupid and perilous to store plutonium and other fissionable material a short distance from the underground caverns where testing is exploding devices with explosive effects hundreds of times more powerful than the bombs that hit Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

If we get the tremors 100 miles away in Las Vegas with enough force to sway buildings, what damage can it do right next door?

Normally it might take dozens of years for any kind of waste to seep down to the underground aquifers that store drinking and agricultural water, but when one of these blasts go off, it can be a matter of seconds for new crevices and fissures to reach the water supplies.

No scientist, physicist or any of the monkeys that inhabit the Department of Energy who pass off the line about safety can truthfully tell us what effect these tremendous blasts may have on water or nuke storage.

Our delegations can tell both houses of Congress, take your pick. Test the hellish weapons or store the perilous wastes. You can't have both or soon there will be no Nevada.

We need less and less of press releases and more and more of affirmative action.

Do the job you were sent to Washington to perform, or get the hell out. Others would be happy to do the job for you.

LAS VEGAS SUN

Friday

Home June 6, 1986

Vol. 36 No. 347 © Las Vegas SUN Circ. 383-7200 25c 78 Pages

Nevada's Largest Morning Newspaper

Vucanovich opposes nuke dumpsite bill

By MARY MANNING
SUN Staff Writer

Rep. Barbara Vucanovich, R-Nev., strongly objecting to a bill introduced by Rep. Jim Weaver, D-Ore., to remove Hanford, Wash., as a potential nuclear dumpsite, called it "arrogant, ill-informed and politically motivated" Thursday.

Weaver said the Department of Energy would waste $1 billion studying the Hanford Nuclear Reservation for the nation's first high-level nuclear repository opening in 1998.

Weaver claimed Nevada's Yucca Mountain, at the edge of the nation's nuclear proving ground the Nevada Test Site, was "far superior." The congressman spent Saturday at Camp Desert Rock with anti-nuclear demonstrators and astrophysicist Carl Sagan, author Ann Druyan, Sagan's wife and activist Daniel Ellsberg.

"Congressman Weaver never got within 50 miles of Yucca Mountain, and now he says that he became convinced that Yucca Mountain is far superior to the Washington site, and will introduce legislation to remove Hanford from consideration," Vucanovich said.

Vucanovich said the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 has already been broken by the DOE's site selection process for a dumpsite to bury more than 70,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel and highly radioactive defense wastes.

Vucanovich has been criticized by Nevada Democrats as not being forceful enough in opposing Nevada's selection as a dumpsite. She called on Rep. Harry Reid, D-Nev., — a candidate for the U.S. Senate — to "control members of his party wishing to target Nevada for the high level waste repository."

On Wednesday, Washington state filed suit against President Reagan, DOE and its chief John Herrington, charging the Reagan administration "betrayed us."

(See VUCANOVICH, Page 9A)

Vucanovich objects to bill eliminating nuclear dumpsite

(Continued from Page 1A)

When Reagan announced Nevada had been selected in the top three, Gov. Richard Bryan immediately filed five lawsuits with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to stop the site selection process. Nevada has no nuclear power plants and does not use nuclear power from other states.

"The U.S. Department of Energy betrayed us," Washington Attorney General Ken Eikenberry said as he announced the trio of lawsuits.

"How can they deny this was a political decision?" he asked.

Eikenberry accused the DOE of ignoring an elaborate and detailed scientific process that took years to develop in favor of "geologic diversity as an excuse to pick Hanford."

Washington, as Nevada did, noted in its suits that all midwestern and eastern states were excluded from the final list and dropped as sites for a second nuclear repository.

"The western states should not be left to bear the nation's high level waste burdens," Eikenberry said. "It is a nationnal problem requiring a national solution.

Idaho's Gov. John Evans said Wednesday he asked President Reagan to reconsider his decision not to site a nuclear waste repository in the East.

The Democratic governor said the Energy Department's decision to put the dump in Nevada, Washington, or Texas means the nation's entire load of spent fuel and highly radioactive wastes would be shipped to a western site.

"I am convinced that the construction of a second repository in the eastern part of the United States, nearer to most of the nuclear power plants which generate spent fuel and high level waste, is amply justified," Evans said in his letter to the president.

Evans also said he asked Idaho's congressional delegation to sponsor legislation requiring a second repository and allowing states next to the states where the repository may be located to participate in repository siting decisions.

Nuke dump search chief won't quit

By Vaughn Roche
Review-Journal

A Department of Energy spokesman said Thursday that an official directing the search for a nuclear waste repository site would not resign and probably would not be fired as Rep. Harry Reid, D-Nev., has demanded in a letter to President Reagan.

Jim Merna said Ben Rusche, head of the Civilian Radioactive Waste Office, had no intention of resigning despite Reid's claim that the process to select one of three states "had become little more than a politically motivated sham" under his direction.

"We realize the congressman is looking out for his constituency," Merna said. "But the fact is that the secretary of the department and the president have said they are quite pleased with Mr. Rusche's performance. We're aware of the sensitivities, but the repository must go somewhere."

Reid, a U.S. Senate candidate, called earlier this week for Rusche's resignation. He followed through with a letter Thursday asking Reagan to dismiss Rusche and to remove Nevada from consideration as a repository site until the selection process is "fair and open."

Reid accused Rusche of defending a DOE process that had narrowed the list of prospective states to three — Nevada, Texas and Washington — without complete geological studies. He said the process continued despite Nevada's claim that it violated federal law.

Reid also said Rusche "blatantly misrepresented" a 9th U.S. Circuit Court opinion by telling Congress that the court rejected Nevada's legal argument, though it ruled the state was entitled to federal funds to study the site where the repository might be built.

Nevada has not yet received the $1 million in study funds despite the court ruling.

Nevada's prospective repository site is 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas at Yucca Mountain.

The burial vault would hold 70,000 tons of spent fuel rods from commercial nuclear reactors. The rods would remain radioactive and deadly for at least 10,000 years.

Nevada officials are concerned not only with the fuel's longtime storage in ground that might destabilize over the years but with the risks associated with transporting it into the state by rail and road.

"I do not believe that the future placement and storage of nuclear waste is to be taken lightly," Reid said in his letter to Reagan. "It seems that in discussing this problem, some have lost sight of the fact that real people and real places are involved.

"I am convinced that there is either a grave lack of communication and legal knowledge (at the DOE) or an intentional misrepresenting of the facts. In any case, Mr. Rusche's ability to properly manage a program of such extreme national importance is in serious question."

Merna denied that Rusche or other DOE officials were unconcerned with safety or motivated by politics.

"Politics is not the issue here," Merna said. "We're trying to ensure that a repository will be as safe as possible. No one wants the repository, and I'm sure Ben Rusche has been criticized in every state, but he's bearing the brunt of it all pretty well. He won't quit."

Metro

Friday, June 6, 1986 LAS VEGAS SUN

Reid writes letter urging Reagan to oust Rusche

By MARY MANNING
SUN Staff Writer

Rep. Harry Reid, D-Nev., asked President Reagan in a strongly-worded letter to remove Nevada as a possible site for a high-level nuclear repository and called for the "resignation or removal" of Ben Rusche, director of the Department of Energy's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management.

Reagan and the Department of Energy announced that Yucca Mountain, 60 miles northwest of Las Vegas, Deaf Smith County, Texas, and Hanford, Wash., were the top three choices to become the nation's first repository for highly radioactive wastes.

Reid said he was "forced to ask for the dismissal of Mr. Rusche and the removal of Nevada as a site characterization candidate until a fair and open selection process can proceed under new leadership."

Gov. Richard Bryan supported Reid in his request dated June 4.

"It seems that in discussing this problem some have lost sight of the fact that *real* people and *real* places are involved, and those same people and places will be significantly impacted by the decisions that are made at OCRWM," Reid said.

The congressman demanded an "open and fair" site selection process. "This has not been the case thus far," Reid said.

The three sites were chosen before studies into rocks, soil and water were conducted, Reid said. In addition, DOE cancelled plans for a second repository.

Reid called the site selection process and Rusche's defense of it as "a process which has become little more than a politically motivated sham to rid the country of an unwanted problem."

Nevada and Washington have filed a total of eight lawsuits against DOE since the announcement was made May 28.

Rusche has also ignored a court order to give $1 million in federal funds to Nevada for independent studies of Yucca Mountain, and he "blatantly misrepresented" the fund status to Congress, Reid said.

"I am convinced that there is either a grave lack of communication and legal knowledge at OCRWM or an intentional misrepresentation of the facts," Reid wrote.

Earlier Reid said the three Republican congressional members — Sen. Paul Laxalt, Sen. Chic Hecht, and Rep. Barbara Vucanovich — "failed to use their stated influence" with President Reagan.

In a separate arena, Reid has asked for a complete report from DOE on the April 10 underground nuclear test called "Mighty Oak," after two Nevada Test Site workers were exposed to low levels of radioactive iodine.

However, he said DOE delayed explanations and there have been "gross contradictions" by the federal agency that operates the test site and is in charge of designing, building and operating the high-level nuclear repository in Nevada, Washington or Texas.

It took nearly three weeks for DOE to respond to Reid's May 8 letter requesting information on the nuclear test that went awry beneath Rainier Mesa, the first test by the United States to break an extended unilateral test ban by the Soviet Union, Reid aide Larry Werner said.

Reid's office received a letter from DOE headquarters in Washington, D.C., saying his request had been forwarded to its Nevada operations office.

"If we wanted to talk to the local office, we would have picked up the phone and called," Werner said.

LAS VEGAS SUN

Thursday

Home June 5, 1986

Vol.

Nevada's Largest Morning Newspaper

Where I Stand

By Hank Greenspun

An expert is one who knows more and more about less and less.

The quote is not mine, but it comes to mind through a letter from George E. Stone of Las Vegas, who accuses SUN reporter Mary Manning and me of acting like experts on nuclear energy without any credentials to back us up.

According to Mr. Stone, if Mary and I will be willing to give a short course on nuclear energy, he and a few hundred of his nuclear scientist friends are available. It appears Mr. Stone is an expert and would be willing to ride through any city on back of a truck hauling spent fuel rods to prove there is no problem.

Stone also states that there are thousands of scientists and technicians who have devoted their lives to making nuclear energy safe and usable and believe in it.

There is more of the usual stuff about the paper being run by the Russians and ends with, "All news media should be required to state in any article — 'fact or fiction.'"

It doesn't happen to be a friendly letter, but I will answer it with all the expertise I failed to acquire after studying nuclear energy from the first day of atmospheric testing in Nevada in the early '50s, to the present controversy about making Nevada a high level dumpsite for the entire nation and even other parts of the earth.

I happened to be the first newsman to be accredited to the Nevada Test Site in 1949 with top security clearance. I and other reporters from around the country were briefed each morning before making the bus trip to Mercury to witness the tests. We experienced all the dramatic pulls and pushes on the body as the nuclear device was detonated in air, so we learned firsthand about the deadly effects it could have on humans, animals and plant life for many square miles.

We have spent hundreds of hours at hearings listening to nuclear scientists and physicists discuss the pros and cons of nuclear energy, and have even brought action against the Nuclear Engineering Co. to prevent them from making Beatty a low level waste dump. The evidence we brought before the hearings caused NEC to change

(See WHERE I STAND, Page 2A)

Where I Stand

Hank Greenspun

(Continued from Page 1A)

its name to USEcology because of their sorry record of dumping in other states.

When Gov. Richard Bryan was the Atty. Gen. of Nevada, he instituted a hearing in Las Vegas to start proceedings to close the du[illegible] down. Top nuclear scientists and physicists were brought in as [illegible]nesses to tell of the danger of dumping nuke waste. We sat through every hearing for hours on end, absorbing every word and writing hundreds of thousands of words about the perils.

When Howard Hughes arrived in Nevada at the end of 1966 to ta[illegible]p residence at the Desert Inn, his first reaction was to leave w[illegible]he learned about the testing at the Nevada Test Site.

In an effort to alert the local residents to the potential peril of nuclear energy, he brought in top scientists and physicists to spend hours with me to get firsthand knowledge of the dangers to the underground water supplies plus the peril to life for humans and other forms of life from accidental radiation leaks.

My son, Brian, testified before every legislative hearing on the perils of storing nuke waste in Southern Nevada, a subject which he studied intensively because he was a small tot when atmospheric testing started at Mercury.

[illegible] Vegas parents were cautioned by AEC people to open the win[illegible]ws of their homes slightly and move beds away from the windows in case the blasts, 90 miles away, would shatter the panes of glass.

We moved the cribs of our little babies into the center of the bed[illegible]m to keep them from harm's way. What we didn't know was the [illegible]ential hazard of radiation because the AEC agency assured us there was no danger.

The citizens of Utah and Nevada later learned differently, but many had already died or were victims of cancer and leukemia.

Gov. Bryan was indoctrinated real early in his political career because he held hearings that were paneled by experts on nuclear physics, so he has always been against making Nevada a nuke waste burying ground.

This newspaper does not distort the facts given to us by the Department of Energy. Experience has shown that the DOE is the culprit when it comes to distorting information and hiding facts.

One doesn't have to be an expert to know that dumping nuke waste is perfectly safe. Three Mile Island and Chernobyl in the Ukraine are examples of the total safety of nuclear energy.

Through ignorance, I exposed my children to the perils of radiation in the early days of testing. Years of doubt and anxiety have broadened my knowledge.

Possibly I am a little romantic, but when the dramatic moment comes in the life of a parent when the doctor tells him that a child of his has developed tumors and the cause is unexplainable, the mind immediately starts conjuring visions of milk the child had as an infant or of foods in the growing stage that have been exposed to radioactivity and fed to the child that might have been the cause.

And then comes the remorse, the self-flagellation for not having furiously protested earlier before the poisoning process came into being.

Expert George Stone may bemoan the possible loss of jobs and threaten our survival, but of one thing we can all be certain — no vacillating public official or sycophantic party follower will deter this parent and editor from furiously guarding the precious lives of his grandchildren and all the children of Nevada.