

Secretary  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001  
Attn: Rule Making & Adjudication Staff

DOCKETED  
USNRC

February 28, 2008 (11:45am)

OFFICE OF SECRETARY  
RULEMAKINGS AND  
ADJUDICATIONS STAFF

February 13, 2008

Gentlemen & Ladies:

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I am writing to protest the proposal to dump nuclear waste in Utah. Why would the U.S. ever accept radioactive waste from another country (Italy), except, of course, for money. I suppose you know that soon the Energy Solutions facility in Utah will be the sole repository for waste from 36 states and Italy, and could eventually serve much of Europe.

It is my understanding that the radioactivity in the radioactive wastes being sent from Italy to our state is in the compound Neptunian 247, which has a 1/2 life of over 2 1/2 million years. The gamma rays it gives off can pass through clothing and can cause tissue cancer to everyone exposed to them. I believe many people in Italy near the disposal area have become infected and are terminal from this radiation.

I am a senior adult and have lived in Salt Lake City, Utah all of my life. My husband I have 3 children, 7 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. We are concerned for their future health.

My father, Dr. L. E. Viko, now deceased, was a noted cardiologist, who taught at the University of Utah Medical School, was on the Board of Regents and was an organizer of the Board of Health of <sup>Salt</sup>Alt Lake City, Utah. He insisted that dairies pasteurize their milk properly.

Due to his position and work, our family was very aware of the environmental contamination due to underground nuclear testing in Nevada in the 1950s and 1960s. Nuclear testing was finally stopped in the 1990s after many people suffered from this contamination.

Please don't make Utah the dumping ground or garbage repository for the world's atomic wastes to satisfy the profits for the Energy Solutions. This company has the Utah Governor's support along with many of our congressmen and it has changed the name of one of our biggest buildings from the Delta Center to Energy Solutions through donations to secure their position for political gain to enable this disposal site to emerge.

There is also the question of checking vehicles that bring in the waste and (as in the article I am enclosing), Energy Solutions will not verify the concentration of the radioactivity within the containers once they arrive here in Utah. Where would they ever be checked?

If there were ever a terrorist attack in Tooele County where the material will be stored, the radioactivity danger could be deadly to our whole population in Utah in many surrounding states.

Please remember that Utah has beautiful natural canyons: Zion's, Bryce, Canyonlands and Moab with many unusual plants and animals. All this will be exposed to the danger of toxic waste unless you act. Please help protect our children and grandchildren for generations to come.

We are relying on your protection and action in this cause.

Sincerely,

*Margaret V. Coombs*

Margaret V. Coombs

*2581 East 1300 South  
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# The Salt Lake Tribune

## Put proposal to dump nuclear waste in Utah under microscope

Brian Moench

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The proposal by EnergySolutions Inc. to accept nuclear waste from Italy has become, pardon the pun, a "hot" topic for Utah. The potential for this stroke of brilliance to have health and economic repercussions for many Utah citizens requires that every angle be thoroughly dissected in the public arena before permission is granted.

Beginning with Marie Curie, the scientific community and then government regulatory agencies have consistently underestimated the public health consequences of radioactivity exposure at every stage of evolution of the nuclear industry.

Thousands of Utahns became the victims of underestimating the toxicity of above-ground nuclear testing in Nevada. The environmental contamination of underground nuclear testing was also underestimated and it was allowed to continue until the early 1990s.

The toxicity that uranium miners were exposed to was underestimated and many died from malignancies. The mill tailings

from the processing of uranium ore were initially thought to be benign, and for several years these tailings were used as building material, incorporated into the cement poured in foundations. Eventually, the folly of this practice became clear and those buildings had to be closely monitored for high levels of radioactivity. Some had to be abandoned.

X-rays were once thought to be innocuous, which resulted in the public receiving countless X-rays without consideration of the possible consequences of repeated exposures. Remember, taking X-rays of the feet used to be part of buying a new pair of shoes.

Likewise, when nuclear power plants were first built, little thought was given to the problem of disposing of the radioactive waste because the extent of the toxicity was not fully understood. Obviously we are paying now for that lack of understanding.

Because of this extensive history of tragic miscalculation, the public has every reason to be suspicious about whether practices at EnergySolutions' repository at Clive, the largest commercial nuclear waste dump in the country, and the federal regulations it must meet, adequately protect our health. The burden of proof should be on the nuclear industry to unequivocally demonstrate that the waste stored at

# The Salt Lake Tribune

EnergySolutions' disposal facility is harmless.

According to media reports in Europe, the disposal industry in Italy is so riddled with corruption that it is routine for that country's waste to be much "hotter" than advertised. A highly regarded British medical journal, The Lancet Oncology, has detailed higher rates of many types of cancer among Italians living near illegal rubbish dumps owned and managed by the Italian Mafia. These dumps are stuffed with radioactive and toxic waste and have been leaking deadly gases for many years.

At a hearing last week, we learned the astonishing fact that EnergySolutions has no way of verifying the concentration of radioactivity within containers of waste from any source once they have arrived at its facility.

It requires only a modest dose of skepticism to conclude that dumping Italian waste at EnergySolutions' disposal facility is a spectacularly high-risk venture that offers the public virtually no benefit and an incalculable risk.

When this same risk/benefit analysis was applied in the early 1980s to the MX mobile missile system, and to the Pentagon's "Divine Strake" test last year, the proposals were buried by courageous opposition from the public, religious organizations, and state

and local governments.

Let's hope that same courage is brought to bear on the proposal to dump Italian nuclear waste in Utah.

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\* BRIAN MOENCH is president of Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment.

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## Speak now ... Or forever hold Italy's nuclear waste

Tribune Editorial

Article Last Updated: 02/06/2008 11:35:45 PM MST

Opposition is mounting against EnergySolutions Inc.'s proposal to import low-level radioactive waste from Italy's dismantled nuclear power industry.

The Utah Radiation Control Board and a key U.S. House committee chairman saddled up against the plan last week, joining a posse of nuclear-watchdog groups, the Healthy Environment Alliance of Utah and congressional leaders from Texas, Kentucky and Tennessee.

While the state control board, according to its lawyer, lacks the legal authority to derail the shipments to EnergySolution's dump in Tooele County, it will ask the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission to carefully assess our nation's long-term disposal needs before allowing large volumes of foreign waste to enter the country. The EnergySolutions facility at Clive will soon be the sole repository for waste from 36 states. And if company officials have their way, and the NRC sets a dangerous precedent by granting the high-volume

import license, the facility may eventually serve much of Europe, where public outrage has prevented the development of even low-level disposal sites.

While the board is powerless to stop the plan, the Northwest Interstate Compact on Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management, which controls the flow of waste to the EnergySolutions disposal facility, apparently is not.

In a letter last week, U.S. Rep. Bart Gordon, D-Tenn., the House Science and Technology Committee chairman, reminded the compact that its 1998 decision to open the Tooele facility to waste generated outside the eight-state compact was made to serve "an important national purpose." And that while accepting waste from Europe serves EnergySolutions' purpose - to make money - it serves no purpose for the nation.

If the license were granted, Gordon wrote, "It would say to the world that the United States is open for business and will take the world's low-level radioactive waste until our facilities are filled, regardless of the needs of our country."

The congressman is correct. And that's not the message the United States and Utah should send.

Now it's time for our governor, our congressional delegation and our state House and Senate leaders to pressure the

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compact and the NRC to put a stop to EnergySolutions' plan.

You can do your part, too. The NRC is accepting public comment before ruling on the licensing request. If you're worried that Utah could become the world's radioactive waste dump if the plan is approved, and you should be, send your objections to Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C., 20555-0001, Attn: Rulemaking and Adjudication Staff.