

Good evening and thank you for being here.

I attended the meeting in Hobbs on Monday and had registered to speak at it but decided that it would be better to listen and save my remarks for this meeting. After listening to over 2 hours of prepared statements and hearing the questions and declarations of those in attendance, I would like to address a few of them.

Several years ago, I attended a networking event in Hobbs coordinated by the Southeast New Mexico and West Texas Leadership group. At this event, I met several of the officials from Hobbs and Eunice who spoke at the forum Monday night. At that networking event, I was encouraged as I listened to these representatives discuss the need to think regionally, rather than locally, to support neighboring communities in their efforts to pursue economic diversification. They touted building on those things that we have in common rather than competing against one another, mentioning that Southeast New Mexico was more like West Texas than Santa Fe and West Texas was more like Southeast New Mexico than Austin, and I have seen examples of what we have been able to achieve when working together. When LES, now URENCO, began looking at this area to place a Uranium enrichment facility, both Andrews County and Lea County began courting them. However, once the deal was sealed, and they had decided upon Lea County, we didn't turn our backs on them and oppose placing a uranium enrichment facility in the area because Andrews County and the state of Texas would not receive the same financial gains from the facility as Lea County and the state of New Mexico. Instead, we firmly backed the project, acknowledging the fact that it would benefit the region.

I understand that the Eddy Lea Energy Alliance have passed a resolution that provides Holtec International the option to purchase land to build a proposed storage site for spent nuclear fuel. I can only assume that partnering with Holtec, Areva's competition, would be the only reason why anyone representing the Alliance would have cast doubt as to the integrity of Areva's cask and/or transportation systems, especially since they don't seem to have any problems with the Areva casks that provide shipments to and/or from URENCO or with the fact that Urenco and Areva share a 50/50 interest in a joint venture company, Enrichment Technology Company Limited (ETC). It seems hypocritical to question the safety of the containers that would be used to transport spent fuel to a facility in our county while assuring their constituency that the containers used for the transportation of hexafluoride to a facility in their county, are designed and produced according to strict international regulations, and that these regulations pose high demands on materials used to guarantee safety in different transport situations. That being said, I want to assure our neighbors across the Stateline, that with approximately 80,000 metric tons of high level waste out there, there will be more than enough to go around – enough for a Texas facility and a New Mexico facility – we can be supportive of one another on this issue.

On another note, I heard several individuals raise concerns about terrorism, stating that the presence of High level waste would make West Texas a terrorist target. Not that this is very reassuring, but the Permian Basin is a terrorist target already. We are home to the one of the most prolific and longest-producing oil basins in the United States which accounts for almost 20% of U.S. crude oil production and a quarter of the nation's oil reserves.

In addition, I want to assure all of those who have been led to believe a lie repeated over and over again, that WCS does NOT sit atop the Ogallala Aquifer. Those who say that it does are intentionally misleading people and using fear tactics to try to persuade others to their side. Over the last 20 years, WCS, local water well drillers and oil and gas producers have drilled thousands of wells and spent tens of millions of dollars to verify what's below the surface in western Andrews County, and it's not the Ogallala, and they have gathered a large amount of data. Using this data, the Texas Water Development Board was able to re-map the Ogallala Aquifer to accurately define the aquifer's boundary – showing that it does not extend to WCS' property – providing a more accurate picture of the proper location of the aquifer.

In addition, I want to dispel the myth of "environmental racism" or "environmental injustice" as a charge here. You were told at the meeting in Hobbs that WCS, and late billionaire, Harold Simmons sought out Andrews County as place where they could take advantage of the community, a community that they portray as poorly educated and mostly Hispanic. First, I take offense at the implication that just because we have a majority Hispanic population, that we must be poorly educated. There are many bright, professional and well-educated Hispanics in this community and in others. But, beyond that, I want you to understand that WCS did not seek us, we sought them. We asked them to partner with us, and they have shouldered an incredible and costly burden since doing so. Because our economy is based on oil, it is extremely cyclical, we sought them out in an attempt to diversify and move away from our dependence on the rise and fall of oil prices at the whim of OPEC.

In closing, I want you to know that WCS has been a good corporate citizen. They have donated generously to our Education Foundation. They have provided countless scholarships to graduating seniors. They have sponsored events and activities that improve quality of life in this community. They have donated to local non-profits and organizations. And, they have provided good paying jobs to individuals who love this community and have served Andrews in various capacities. They are our neighbors and our friends.

Thank you.

Julia Wallace, Executive Director – Andrews Chamber of Commerce