



New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light

PO Box 27162, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87125**www.nm-ipl.org**info@nm-ipl.org**505-266-6966

To: Rick Perry, Secretary, Department of Energy
Kristine L. Svinick, Chairperson, Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Members of the New Mexico Congressional Delegation

Dear Mr. Secretary, Madam Chairperson, and Members of Congress:

We are faith leaders from many religious traditions, and from many diverse communities in New Mexico. We are greatly concerned about an issue that will affect our communities, our future generations, and the wonderful state we call “home.” As Pope Francis stated in his 2015 encyclical addressing climate change and the economy, “As faith leaders we take seriously the responsibility to help discern what is equitable, just, and for the common good of Our Common Home.”

Our concern is about a license application by Holtec International for the Consolidated Interim Storage of high-level radioactive waste that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) will consider. As stated in the license application, this proposed project would allow the storage of 110,000 tons of spent nuclear reactor fuel from nuclear power plants in 35 states. The proposal is for a shallow sub-surface burial system in Lea County between Carlsbad and Hobbs. This facility would store the spent fuel currently at the power plants as well as the spent fuel from what is currently in use and projected for future years.

We are concerned that the decisions to approve this project will be made without adequate time for communities to understand the project and voice their concerns. Some of the issues are:

1. The safety of the transportation of the spent fuel on highways and railroads through communities. Also, since this is a “storage” site and not a “disposal site” like the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), at some future point the spent fuel will need to be removed and sent to a disposal site, thus doubling the transportation risk.
2. The safety of the operations at the site during construction and operation. Spent fuel is many thousands of times more radioactive than the waste disposed of at WIPP.
3. Assurance that The State of New Mexico will not have to shoulder the cost of railways, roads, accident mitigation and recovery, and future clean-up and decommissioning of the site. The operating entity is likely to be Holtec Government Services, LLC, a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) and as such is protected from many of the financial consequences of failure. If their corporation dissolves, who is stuck with the bill? New Mexico does not have the resources for this.
4. The public has been unable to obtain information from the NRC regarding Holtec Government Services, LLC compliance with regulatory requirements, safety performance, and financial responsibility in their existing operations. Holtec has no current presence in New Mexico so their corporate ethics are unknown.
5. When the people of New Mexico agreed to the WIPP Site they were promised that New Mexico would not store high-level nuclear waste. The Federal government has been unable to agree on a disposal site for the permanent disposal of spent nuclear fuel, and given that history we are concerned that the “storage facility” here will become a de-facto disposal location.

6. There is also an environmental justice concern for this project. We already have a large number of industrial activities which can pollute our air, land, and water and pose potential failure risk. Our citizens, many of whom are Hispanic, bear a disproportional amount of risk as citizens of New Mexico living in the communities where environmentally risky operations take place.

7. We are concerned that the NRC does not have the resources or presence to adequately monitor or regulate the construction or operation of this facility. The NRC has no current presence in Southeast New Mexico. The WIPP site is overseen by the Department of Energy (DOE) which has decades of presence in New Mexico.

8. Waste Control Specialists, LLC has already started the development of a storage facility for spent nuclear fuel near the Texas/New Mexico border near Eunice, NM. This raises the question of the economic viability of this project since a competitor is already started.

Our religions have ancient roots, and this ancient wisdom calls us to protect and care for Creation and Community. One passage in the Judeo-Christian tradition from the Book of Deuteronomy calls us to be responsible and to engage in these issues: "Today, I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life that you and your children may live."

Please take action to ensure that all concerns for the risk of this project are in the open, receive public scrutiny, and receive due consideration.

Thank you for the consideration of our request.

Undersigned Faith Leaders and Organizations:

Rev. Susan Quass
Executive Director
New Mexico Conference of Churches

Bishop David Bailey
Episcopal Church Navajoland
Farmington, NM

Sr. Joan Brown,osf
Executive Director, NM Interfaith Power & Light
Albuquerque, NM

Sr. Rose Marie Cecchini, MM
Director, Office of Life, Peace, Justice &
Creation, Catholic Charities of Gallup Diocese
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SouthWest Conference Minister
United Church of Christ

Rev. Nick King
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Carlsbad, NM

Rev. Stephanie Harmon
Methodist Chaplain
Carlsbad, NM

Rev. Marty Singleterry
Pastor, St Peter Lutheran
Retired Methodist Superintendent
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Rev. Gene and Ellen Harbaugh
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Associate Pastor, Holy Rosary Parish
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Fr. Tom Smith OFM Conv.
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Fr. Richard Rohr, O.F.M.
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The Rev. Holly Beaumont, D. Min.
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Lynn R. Anner-Bolieu, Deacon (Ret.)
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JustFaith Facilitator, St. John XXIII
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Rev. Larry Bernard, ofm
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Sr. Diana Wauters
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Minister Emerita, Peoples Church of Chicago
Cerrillos, NM

Rev. Harry Ebert
Pastor, First Presbyterian
Santa Fe, NM

Rev. Andrew Black
Pastor, First Presbyterian
Santa Fe, NM

Rev. Sarah TevisTownes
Pastor and Teacher, Church of the Good
Shepherd UCC, Albuquerque, NM

Rev. Gail Marriner
Pastor, Unitarian Universalist
Santa Fe, NM

Rev. Tiffany Curtis
Pastor, First Christian Church
Santa Fe, NM

Rev. Sue Joiner
Pastor, First Congregational United
Church of Christ, Albuquerque, NM

Rev. Erica Lea-Simka
Albuquerque Mennonite Church
Albuquerque, NM

Pastor Anne Morawski
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Associate in Global Mission

Jutta Stonawski
Teacher of the Gifted
Gallup, NM

Rev. John Dear
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Rev Sharon Littrell-Marsh, Ph.D
United Church of Christ
Southwest Conference

Fr. Frank A Quintana
Pastor of Bl. Oscar Romero Catholic Comm.
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Rabbi Nahum Ward-Lev
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Congregation of Santa Fe

Rev. Jeremiah Griffin
Pastor, St. Chad Episcopal Church
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Rev. Dr. Stephen J. Miller
Disciples of Christ pastor, retired
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Rev. Anita Amstutz
Anabaptist Fellowship of Alamosa
Mountain States Mennonite Conference

Rev. Joan Jiko Halifax
Abbot, Upaya Zen Center
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Rev. Kenneth Cuthbertson, PhD
Presbyterian (USA)
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Rabbi Neil Amswych
Temple Beth Shalom
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The Rev. Angela Herrera
Senior Minister, First Unitarian Church
Albuquerque, NM

The Rev. Ryan W. Roberts, n/OLF
Albuquerque, NM

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Lay leader, Westminster Presbyterian
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University Heights United Methodist
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Rev. H. Blaine Wimberly
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Janet Gildea, SC
Sisters of Charity
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Peggy Deneweth, SC
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Carol Wirtz, SC
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Rev. Karen Bash
Retired United Church of Christ Minister
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Rev. Allen Bash
Retired United Church of Christ Minister
Albuquerque, NM

Rev. Alexander Lenzo+
Priest, St. Francis Episcopal Church
Rio Rancho, NM

CHAIRMAN Resource

From: Joan Brown,osf <joankansas@swcp.com>
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2018 7:08 PM
To: CHAIRMAN Resource; ",NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran - CMRBARAN"@nrc.gov; ",NRC Commissioner Stephen Burns - CMRBURNS"@nrc.gov; CMBARAN@nrc.gov; CMBURNS@nrc.gov
Cc: Senator Tom Udall Tom Udall; Senator@martinheinrich.senate.gov; elizabeth.reitzel@mail.house.gov; jennifer.cataechis@mail.house.gov; MacGregor, Robert
Subject: [External_Sender] New Mexico faith leaders concerned about Holtec letter
Attachments: faith leader holtec letter to NRC and legis March 19, 2018.docx

NRC Chair Kristine Svinicki
NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran
NRC Commissioner Stephen Burns

Dear NRC Chair and Commissioners,
I am writing as the Executive Director of NM Interfaith Power and Light regarding ethical and moral concerns around the proposed Holtec project in South East New Mexico. I have attached a faith leader letter outlining these concerns and signed by many faith leaders around the state.

Please inform me where the process of this project stands at this point.

Thank you for your consideration and your reply.

Peace and good,
Sr. Joan Brown,osf
Executive Director, NM Interfaith Power and Light

cc: Senator Tom Udall
Senator Martin Heinrich
Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham
Rep. Ben Ray Lujan
Rep. Steve Pearce

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Joan Brown,osf
Executive Director
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light (NMIPL)

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“There is no inner world without the outer world.” Thomas Berry, Author of The Great Work

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