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Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Administration
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United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington DC 20555

COMMENT (169)
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Re: Public Comment
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Above Ground High-Level Radioactive Waste Interim Storage Facility
HOLTEC
Lea County, New Mexico.

To Whom it may Concern:

This letter is written to express opposition of Thomas E. Jennings, a resident of Roswell, New Mexico, to the pending proposal to allow above ground high-level radioactive waste storage facility to be sited in southeastern New Mexico or West Texas. My petroleum business is primarily located in the Permian Basin located in Southeastern New Mexico and West Texas..

In the late 1980's United States Department of Energy (DOE) during public hearings for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) and following hearings over the life of WIPP, the DOE and proponents from Eddy and Lea Counties (New Mexico) have always maintained and promised the WIPP facility and southeastern New Mexico would never include surface storage and that levels of stored radioactive material would never be increased, enhanced or expanded to include high level radioactive waste.

Quite simply, this effort to establish a surface high level radiation waste interim storage facility is in violation of the intent and stated mission of WIPP and the promises made to residents of southeastern and all New Mexico. In the late 1980's elected and government officials making the promise included President George H. W. Bush, Senator Pete V. Domenici, Senator Jeff Bingaman, Representative Joe Skeen, DOE Secretary John O'Leary, and officials from Carlsbad, Hobbs, Eddy and Lea Counties, New Mexico. In addition, in 1992 Congress, by law, outlawed the storage of high-level waste at WIPP.

There was an accidental release of radiation, known as the "Valentine Accident", in February 2014 that exposed workers and the environment to radioactive radiation. However, this type of incident was guaranteed by the DOE and WIPP proponents it would never occur during the life of the facility. Although it was claimed to be a "minor" incident, the cost to remediate the incident may cost several Billion Dollars to remediate.

The attempt to now store high-level nuclear waste in the Permian Basin of southeastern New Mexico and West Texas violates both promises made and the public trust of area residents.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Above Ground High-Level Radioactive Waste Interim Storage Facility - HOLTEC
2018.04.30

The Holtec and the Eddy and Lea (Counties) Energy Alliance (ELEA) proposal to build a high-level radioactive waste storage facility for a nationwide repository for hundreds of thousands metric tons of existing waste in addition to future generated waste between Hobbs and Carlsbad New Mexico lies right in the middle of the Permian Basin.

The Permian Basin is one of the most prolific petroleum provinces in the world with over 15,000 feet of sedimentary source rock. Currently, the Permian Basin is the "hottest play" in the world with most major and many independent petroleum companies actively exploring and producing significant volumes of petroleum. In addition, the petroleum industry is spending many billions of dollars annually in the Permian Basin.

This petroleum producer and many others have concern that an accident or incident, however unlikely, resulting in a significant spill or other incident involving transportation could render the affected property unusable for generations. Any significant accident or incident could decimate the local agricultural and petroleum economies as well as the State of New Mexico annual budget and the New Mexico Permanent Fund.

Regarding transportation of radioactive waste, original WIPP original negotiations on routes came with over \$200 Million funding for roads and infrastructure. The Holtec proposal neither includes funding for roads nor infrastructure.

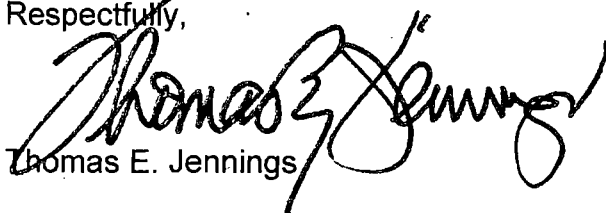
Petroleum service activity and agricultural and dairy businesses all utilize local roads and railroads to send and receive products and services. Residents of southeastern New Mexico know just how bad the roads are now with some of the highest rates for both accidents and fatalities.

Another significant concern is property insurance coverage excludes ALL types of nuclear radiation contamination thereby precluding property damage rights should there be an incident. While the operator has been required to post financial assurances, the funds required would be insufficient to compensate business, property and mineral owners in the event there is another spill or incident in southeastern New Mexico.

In summation, this resident, business, property and mineral owner, opposes the licensing of the proposed facility for temporary storage and transportation of high level radioactive waste in the Permian Basin.

Thank you for your careful consideration of my comments and concerns.

Respectfully,


Thomas E. Jennings

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