

NRC-2018-0052

April 30, 2018

Nuclear Regulatory Commission public meeting

ENMU, Roswell Campus Union Building, Room 110, 48 University Boulevard

From a concerned citizen: Carol Merrill

I am Carol Merrill, a retired librarian and teacher from the Albuquerque area. I am a published author, and I have been a member of CARD, Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Deposit, for 30 years.

I wish you were having public meetings in Santa Fe and Albuquerque so that more citizens could voice their concerns in person. Two of my friends live in Cerrillos, New Mexico, one block from a railroad. They want to say to you, "Leave the high-level waste where it is."

Another of my friends owns a newspaper north of Albuquerque in the village of Corrales, the *Corrales Comment*, where I work as a freelance reporter. He is unable to be here because today is deadline day. He wants to say to you, "Back in the '70's and '80's New Mexican citizens were repeatedly reassured that locating the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) would not lead to the deposit of high level waste in New Mexico. This current proposal is an unconscionable breach of those promises never to allow this to happen. That is inexcusable!"

For my concerns: There is no way to justify hauling high level nuclear waste across thousands of miles of aging train tracks endangering countless communities! The canisters that Holtec is trying to get the government to pay for are defective.

For one thing, they are not able to withstand the high temperatures of southern New Mexico. An engineer who studied Holtec's specifications for their proposed canisters told me this. Is this correct information? The temperature around southern New Mexico sometimes reaches 120 degrees and their canisters are not effective at that high temperature. The canisters will be 12 inches up out of the ground. Perhaps this project was not well planned.

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The spent fuel rods are from power plants mostly on the east coast, so we do not even receive benefit from the electricity that was generated. If the nuclear waste is so safe for us here, why don't the people around the nuclear power plants keep it there?

The best solution is to leave high level waste near where it was generated. It is important to have effective sealed storage on-site where it is now, without exposing millions of people along railroads to deadly high level waste in ineffective canisters.

One additional concern: If there would be a serious accident, for example, a derailment in a heavily populated urban area with a breach of the seal on the canister necessitating a mass evacuation with an area becoming uninhabitable for a long long time, who would be liable? Is Holtec willing to be responsible should an accident occur? If they are not liable, how can we as citizens expect them to invest in effective canister? Holtec expects the US government to pay for any accidents. It is my understanding that is illegal. They would require an act of congress to proceed. That is out of the question. Time to reconsider. This proposition is unacceptable!

For our energy concerns in this great nation it is time to employ our natural genius to find more elegant, safe generators using wind, sun, water, tides, solar, and geothermal for starters.

Thank you for listening to my concerns,

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