



**ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER
UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
*of the United States of America***
A PROGRAM OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION
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May 21, 2018

**Statement of Rosemary Blanchard, Chair, Albuquerque Chapter United Nations
Association USA**

**To the Albuquerque City Council In Support of Council Memorial M-18-1:
OPPOSING TRANSPORTATION OF HIGH-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE VIA RAILWAY
THROUGH THE CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE FOR THE PURPOSE OF ... STORAGE ... IN
NEW MEXICO.**

President of the Council, Councilor Davis, Members of the Council,

My name is Rosemary Blanchard. I am the Chair of the Albuquerque Chapter of the United Nations Association USA. I want to thank Councilor Davis for introducing this resolution and all of you Councilors for giving it serious consideration this evening.

Several years ago I worked as a policy analyst for the Division of Dine' Education and shortly thereafter Chaired the Social Sciences Department at UNM Gallup.

I reference those two previous positions because during my time working with the Navajo Nation and teaching future Navajo human services workers at UNM Gallup I kept encountering the effects of the indifference of both the Nuclear Industry and the Federal Government Agencies responsible for regulating them and protecting the health of civilians. I have sat in a meeting where an Indian Health Service Official explained that he had no legal obligation to inform a public school district in Sanders, AZ that the water their kids were using in the school was contaminated with radioactive waste from the Church Rock tailings spill of 1972. He was having to dig deeper artesian wells for some federally mandated housing because of the radioactive contamination, but that was as far as his job went.

Of course, the corporation that had caused the mess was no longer in existence and could not be called upon to clean up their mess. I have heard representatives of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency and the Department of Energy state boldly that

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they did not bear the responsibility for cleaning up radioactive waste of projects they were prepared to approve – in that case it was in situ leach uranium mining in and near the Navajo Nation. I read an official federal document advising that Navajo ranchers along the contaminated watershed could raise their sheep, but they probably shouldn't eat them. The document, of course, was leaked, not distributed.

You are the people's government here in Albuquerque and we need to rely on you to protect the safety and security of our city. Article VIII of the Albuquerque City Charter promises:

The Council shall preserve, protect and promote human rights and human dignity, shall promote and encourage the recognition and exercise of human responsibility...

I hope you will live up to that mandate. It is an important exercise of human responsibility to protect the civil population, your neighbors, from risks of exposure to radioactive waste, to use your authority as City Councilors to carefully examine schemes to move high level nuclear wastes on railroad cars through cities like Albuquerque, to take a wary look at promises that "nothing can go wrong." If the Holtec facility is constructed and if high level nuclear wastes are transported by rail to that site, there will be accidents – at the site and en route over the 20 years and 10,000 shipments anticipated at this point. Albuquerque will be one of the cities en route. Please use whatever authority you have within our Federal system to protect Albuquerque from being one of the mistakes this scheme will experience.

Please approve M-18-1 and use your authority as the City Council of Albuquerque to protect our community from the risks of this dangerous scheme.

Thank you.

Terry Sloan - UNA - Albuquerque Chapter Member.