

United States Senate

Re: Kelly Masterson

3/24/80

Respectfully referred to:

Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H. Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20555

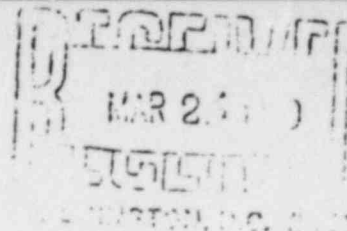
Because of the desire of this office to be responsive to all inquiries and communications, your consideration of the attached is requested. Your findings and views, in duplicate form, along with return of the enclosure, will be appreciated by

..... Paul Laxalt
U.S.S.

Mark attention Barbar Burgess on
Form #2 envelope



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March 18, 1980

Senator Paul Laxalt
Room 329
Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Laxalt,

I am writing to you to call your attention to and request your action on the burial of flushed radioactive materials from the Dresden #1 nuclear plant in Illinois, at the disposal site in Beatty, Nevada.

On April 1st a week of flushing 85,000 gallons of chemical solvent through Commonwealth Edison's Dresden #1 reactor will begin. The flushed radioactive "crud" mixed with the flushing solvent will then be mixed with other chemicals to make it a solid, plasticlike material filling an estimated 1,200 fifty-five gallon drums. It is our understanding that these drums will be transported to and buried at the NECo waste disposal site in Beatty, Nevada.

Because this project could have a potential impact on citizens you represent, I thought it wise to inform you of some of the special problems involved with the flushing project that make it a matter of concern.

the flushing process to be employed will involve the use of chelating chemical agents which many scientists and studies have found to hasten the migration of wastes from the disposal site. Jerry Brubaker, a nuclear specialist on the President's Council on Environmental Quality has expressed concern over the chemical behaviour of the material when it has been placed in the environment. Further, a geochemist from Princeton, David Crerar has demonstrated in research between 1974 - 1978 at the Oak Ridge Labs in Tennessee that these chelating agents do in fact hasten the migration of radioactive materials from the trenches in which they were originally buried.

these chelating solvents have been used in waste buried in trenches at Oak Ridge where numerous problems have resulted including the radioactive contamination of water, vegetation and fish. (see enclosure)

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chemicals used to solidfy the chelating agent/radioactive waste solution do not guarantee there will be no leakage from the drums into the earth and the water table. A recent Science (June, 1979) article revealed that the resulting polymer matrix could still be pourous enough to permit liquids escape into the burial grounds.

This new project constitutes a massive expansion of the of the NECo site's role - indeed 1,200 barrells flushed out of one aging reactor is minor compared to 86,400 barrells flushed out of the nations seventy-two reactors over the next ten to twenty years that could well come Nevada's way if the precedent of Dresden #1 is set. Compunding this expansion is the serious questions of migration of radioactive wastes away from the burial site and into the Amargosa farm valley.

There are several other related problems but I am sure that the point is clear - there are many problems with the burial of the flushed waste that must be examined, explored and dealt with.

The real problem, however, lies in the reluctance on the part of the DOE, NRC, President's Commission on Enviromental Quality to study these problems. They have ignored petitions and letters calling for an Environmental Impact Statement. It seems incredible to me that the DOE would foot \$8.2 million of the flushing project but would be unwilling to assume an examination of the project's consequences.

I am sure that your interest and involvement in this issue could make a difference. It is imperative that you as a representative of citizens most likely to be impacted, call for an Enviromental Impact Statement from the DOE, NRC, and President's Commission on Environmental Quality or seek to encourage and establish a state strategy to block the burial of these wastes before we have answers to the many questions arising from the undertaking of this unknown, experimental project replete with dangers.

I thank you for your time and concern in this matter of tremendous importance to me and the Sagebrush Alliance.

Sincerely Yours,

Kelly Masterson, ofm

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Sagebrush Alliance

KM/kn

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