

March 25, 1981

DOCKET NUMBER PR-30, 32, 70, 150
PROPOSED RULE (45 NR 90874)
SMELTED ALLOYS

3483

Please reply to:

United States Senate

Washington, D. C. 20510

Attn: Kevin Gillogly

Respectfully referred to:

Congressional Liaison Office
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

Alan J. Dixon
U.S.S.

Form #2

4/14/81

8105080034

5449 W. Sunnyside Ave.
Chicago, Ill. 60630
March 20, 1981

Senator Dixon
R.S.O.B.-456
Washington, D.C. 20510

DOCKET NUMBER ER-30, 32, 70, 150
PROPOSED RULE (48 FR 70874)
SMELTED ALLOYS

3483

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Dear Senator Dixon:

I am strongly opposed to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's proposal that would allow a wide variety of garbage containing small amounts of radioactive material to be dispersed at random into our environment. (See enclosed xerox from the April 1981 edition of Mother Jones magazine.) I am appalled at the NRC's suggestion that low-level radioactive metals be sold as scrap and recycled as consumer goods.

Anyone who knows the principle of addition realizes that we can't keep adding to the low level of background radiation without increasing the sum of radioactivity. Also, if the NRC relinquishes control of this radioactive material, we will have no idea where the material will accumulate and in what amounts.

We must stop the proliferation of nuclear waste and find the best possible storage sites for existing radioactive material. The health and safety of the human race is one area that must have priority over our country's monetary mess.

What is your position regarding this issue, and what type of action have you taken toward a solution?

Sincerely,

Joann Boquist

Joann Boquist



FRONTLINES

Self-Abortion Controversy

Is it survival lore of the '80s, or a step back into the '60s? A slim red book that instructs women on how to give themselves abortions is causing controversy in San Diego.

The book, which is called *When Birth Control Fails*, was written by Suzann Gage of the Los Angeles Feminist Women's Health Center and is published by a small Southern California group called Speculum Press. Gage worked with women from self-help clinics in the United States and abroad to put together the collection of women's experiences with self-abortion. The text describes techniques such as using a bicycle pump or vacuum cleaner for suction, using herbs ("possible undesirable effects are not entirely known by the author") and giving self-saline abortions. Advice is offered on related matters as well—for example, the reader is told how to convince a doctor to perform an abortion by feigning miscarriage with a piece of calf's liver.

The San Diego ruckus was sparked when an association of local clinics that provide health care for women charged publicly that the book recommended backward, dangerous procedures.

In feminist circles throughout the country, reaction has been sharply divided. Some self-help clinics and women's bookstores are distributing the book and offering support. Others agree with a review and letters appearing in the nationally prominent Washington, D.C., publication *Off Our Backs*, which condemned the book as an irresponsible return to the back alleys of yesteryear.

"If the medical, corporate or government establishment put out something like this,



A billboard in Lexington, Kentucky.

Moral Minority Strikes?

encouraging women to take something that could do them harm, feminists would be screaming pretty loudly," wrote reviewer Fran Moura.

"Trying to teach every woman the knowledge to do her own abortion is unrealistic," says one member of the feminist newspaper's staff. "You need experience and an assistant with technical training to help you." While advocating that women's health care be controlled by women, a staffer of *Off Our Backs* characterized self-abortions, particularly herbal techniques, as being as dangerous as "selling coat hangers."

Gage, who is active in the prochoice movement, responds to critics, "It's not our fault that abortion may soon become illegal. . . . Some women are concerned about the safety factor, and so are we, because a woman who doesn't have a clinic or physician available is in a lot more danger than a woman who does. But you have to ask if it's safe in a context. Safe compared to having an un-

wanted child when there's no other option?"

The women at Speculum Press began preparing *When Birth Control Fails* in the mid-1970s in response to requests for advice on self-abortion from women in Chile who had been raped in prisons there.

The book has been distributed in about 15 countries outside the U.S. Particularly chilling right now, reports Gage, is a recent flood of requests for the information from New Zealand, where abortion laws were liberal until 1977. "But the government had a turnaround, and the abortion law was soon turned around, too." □

Next: The Big Flush

Troubled by the high price industries are paying to give radioactive substances a decent funeral, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has proposed that a wide variety of garbage containing small amounts of

radioactive material need not be buried in low-level waste graveyards.

Under the proposed regulations, the stuff could be burned, dumped at the town dump or simply flushed down the toilet. If the contaminated substance is a metal, the NRC suggests that it be sold as scrap, and points out that it could then "be made into any number of consumer or capital equipment products such as automobiles, appliances, furniture, utensils, personal items and coins."

The little-reported reduction in controls would be a big financial break for medical institutions, which are shelling out about \$16 million total in burial costs each year, much of it to dispose of animal carcasses contaminated with trace amounts of radioactivity.

The net benefit to those stuck with hot scrap metal, reports the NRC, would be about \$41.6 million.

In addition, all three of the nation's low-level burial sites (in Washington state, Nevada and South Carolina) are planning to reduce the amount of contaminated waste they will accept from out of state. The proposal could cut in half the volume of trash that medical laboratories alone currently are shipping off.

What about resulting adverse health effects? You guessed it—the NRC, which some antinuclear activists are calling the "Good News" agency, says effects would be negligible, estimating that "less than one health effect would result" from the recycled scrap. The medical waste, says the agency, which would tally up to about 300,000 gallons of contaminated liquid medium and 80,000 cubic feet of animal carcasses, would be a "negligible addition" to the amount of radioactivity already present in the natural environment. □