

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives • Washington, D.C. 20515

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SMELTED ALLOYS

July 13, 1981

Mr. Carlton Kammerer
Office of Congress. Affairs
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20555



Dear Mr. Kammerer:

Enclosed please find a copy of correspondence which is sent for your consideration.

It will be greatly appreciated if you would review the details involved in this matter and advise me of your findings.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

[Handwritten Signature]
RICHARD T. SCHULZE
Member of Congress



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PLEASE RESPOND TO:

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2,
1358 Robinson Avenue
Havertown, PA 19083
June 17, 1981

The Honorable Richard T. Schulze
U. S. House of Representatives
2444 Raeburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Schulz:

There was an editorial in the NEWS OF DELAWARE COUNTY that said the Energy Department made a proposal "that would permit the sale of metals that have been contaminated at Federal nuclear-fuel processing plants." (Copy enclosed.)

I am greatly shocked and frightened to think this idea is even being considered and hope it will never come to pass. Do you know the outcome of this proposal, and what is your position on this matter?

Also, mentioned is a new rule whereby radioactive medical wastes may be dumped in local landfills. Cannot this radiation eventually seep into the water table? The Di Francesco Quarry in Haverford Township will likely become a landfill soon. Is there any chance of radioactive waste materials being dumped there?

Your prompt attention to this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,

Alice V. Bailey
(Mrs. R. A. Bailey)

Enclosure

Opinion

A Radioactive Landfill?

"If there isn't any way to stipulate where the material is going, there isn't any way to know how it will be used," says one scientist, who adds, "it sounds like a lousy idea."

Remarks another: "As a harbinger of things to come, it makes me very nervous."

These scientists were commenting on an Energy Department proposal that would permit the sale of metals that have been contaminated at Federal nuclear-fuel processing plants. "Once sold," a Wall Street Journal reporter points out, "the steel, copper, nickel, and other metals could be used for nearly anything."

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is considering the idea. In fact, NRC suggests the metals could be used for anything from cars to frying pans, jewelry to surgical pins, and, perhaps most incredibly, even dietary supplements, like iron tonic.

NRC says no health hazards would be involved in the use of the metals, since the radiation emitted would be very small. Ha. Had Jesse James ever told a stagecoach driver that a little lead never hurt anyone, he would have been laughed out of the badlands. These days, though, the outlaws sometimes control the reins and, if we're not careful, the strong-boxes may soon be glowing in the dark.

NRC has already received a record 3,300 written comments on the plan, though, and virtually all of them express incredulous opposition. So maybe we'll be spared skilletts that are hot even before we put them on the stove.

What worries us more now is a rule already approved by the nuclear regulators that would exempt some radioactive wastes from strict

burial stipulations. The new rule, which will take effect in the near future, will allow medical wastes — testing liquids, animal carcasses, that sort of thing — containing relatively small amounts of radioactivity to be dumped in local landfills.

NRC reports that sort of material represents about 15 per cent of the waste that went into the three Federal burial sites (in Washington State, Nevada, and South Carolina) last year. Each year, it seems, about 18,000 dogs and 500,000 smaller animals are radioactively contaminated in medical research. Many of those carcasses could be headed toward the dumps of unsuspecting towns and villages before too long.

Haverford Township Planners have received a copy of the landfill ordinance of London Grove Borough, Chester County. They're currently studying the ordinance and preparing to make recommendations to the township commissioners. All of this is being done, of course, with an eye on that day in the future when DiFrancesco Quarry might become a landfill.

One of the reasons a landfill use is being considered for the quarry is because the current shape of that huge hole in the ground presents a clear danger of some future catastrophic cave-in. We submit, however, that a landfill containing radioactive garbage could be far more dangerous than the quarry now is.

Haverford planners and commissioners had better get the full story on this from Washington and act accordingly, while they still have sufficient control over the situation.