

2315 14th. St. #1
Santa Monica, CA 90405
January 30, 1991

Kenneth M. Carr
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Carr:

My name is Ian Carpenter. I'm currently attending Santa Monica College. I'm writing to you about a concern that I have. It's one I'm sure many people have written to you about before. Nuclear waste disposal is a very serious matter, one that cannot be taken lightly. Because of its health risks, nuclear waste must be disposed of in a safe and careful manner. There is much fear and hysteria about the effects of "Radwaste," not all of it is unwarranted fear. Its storage and disposal is something that cannot be carelessly handled. People's lives are at stake, and so is their health. This is highly dangerous stuff Mr. Carr. The longer that it takes to find adequate measures to control radwaste, the more headaches it will create.

The planned cut in Nuclear waste regulation (Abramson 13) is an issue that is puzzling me. How can you make such a cut? Don't you know what you're risking? You plan for only very low-level waste to be exempted, but who knows what might be carelessly placed there? It is very important that any radwaste is regulated. You open the possibility of landfills or reusing nuclear sites with some residual radioactive contamination (Abramson 13).

You yourself even said, "There is no human endeavor that involves a zero level of risk, and radiation is no exception.

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But the levels of radiation that we are talking about here, while not zero, are exceedingly small." While they may be small, who knows what's not small that could get in there? I don't particularly relish the idea of spent reactor fuel rods in a landfill that I may be living by. Would you Mr. Carr? You must think of all the things that could go wrong before you concede to use such a policy. Even the EPA is against this proposal. ^{v.t. do} It will put several of their standards at risk (Abramson 22). I'm forced to agree with them.

A well-known example of carelessness is the collection of radwaste tanks buried at the Hanford nuclear facility, at Hanford, Washington. There lies a huge, potential time bomb. In at least twenty-two of the 177 tanks buried there, hydrogen gas is building up. If this gas were to ignite and explode, it would cover large sections of both Idaho and Washington with intensely radioactive material. This chain reaction would be caused by ferrocyanide, which was placed there in the 50's. The DOE (Department of Energy) stated that the ferrocyanide is capable of causing ~~of~~ ~~causing~~ an explosion equivalent to thirty-six tons of TNT ("Nuclear Waste: Witches Brew At Hanford" 25). The DOE and Westinghouse Hanford (who operate the Hanford facility) say the chances of an explosion are remote ("Nuclear Waste: Witches' Brew At Hanford 26). "Nobody here has sweaty palms," says a DOE member (Nuclear Waste: Witches' Brew At Hanford" 26).

How can that person actually say that? Is he/she some divine being who knows whether or not those tanks will explode? Do you agree with that ^ostatement, Mr. Carr? How would you like to be liv- ✓

ing in those areas? No one can know for sure what's going to happen. Making a statement like that is like saying, "All gather round! I can tell your future! I can cure all your pain and suffering! I make the world go round!" All I can say is that person is a careless, individual. How can you let someone like that work for you? He/she has no right to make such a statement.

How would you like to be living within throwing distance of a nuclear power plant and later learn that the reason that you developed thyroid cancer is because of someone's carelessness? At Hanford nuclear facility it^{is} known that as many as 13,500 residents were exposed to heavy doses of radioactive iodine to their thyroids. Scientists reported this on July 12, 1990, after a two-year study of once secret government records (Abramson 1). Senator John Glenn (D. Ohio), chairman of the Senate Government Affairs Committee said, "The study suggests that the Hanford residents may have been exposed to more radioactive iodine than from any industrial nuclear facility in the world" (Abramson 1).

That's not all. Further studies showed even more evidence. In an official acknowledgement by DOE Secretary James D. Watkins, it was stated that the health of the people living in the Hanford region may have been affected. He conferred with John Till, a nuclear engineer leading the study. "Significantly 'high doses' of iodine were released from 1944 to 1947 at the site. The implications of the report are serious," Watkins said (Abramson 2). Why was it allowed to go on for so long? Why was it allowed to happen in the first place? Imagine yourself in their predicament? The cleanup process will be a long and laborious one. This could have

been avoided if the right steps were taken. It's no wonder as to why the records were kept secret. Such a blunder as this would cause great panic and civil unrest if the residents knew they were the victims of a nuclear project. Why must it be that innocent people must pay for government secrets and experimental failures? These people step into the path of doom as readily as cows to the slaughter.

Envision yourself in a small, dark room. It's not brightly lit, but you can see that it is open on two of its sides. You begin to find an escape route by searching with your hands. You begin to head out of one of the doorways when you hear a sound. You can't quite make it out at first, but you soon realize what it is. You begin to run blindly forward. You glance back for only a moment. The scene that you witness is not a pleasant one. You see a huge, glowing creature. It's armed to the teeth with ten arms and a huge mouth, filled with teeth. Its gelatinous mass stops for a moment where you once were. It begins to glow brightly as it oozes towards you. In your mind you hear a voice speaking to you. You ignore it as you run even faster. It says your name, but you pretend not to hear. You hear its heart pulsating, each beat fills you with fear. Then it speaks, "Why do you flee? You created me. Don't you like what you see?"

You scream as you try for the small opening at the end of the tunnel. At once you feel confident. You think to yourself, "Just a little farther, and I'm home free!" You feel as if your lungs are going to burst as you race along. The monster is gaining on you, glowing steadily brighter as it races after you. "I

Choosing the proper test site can cause some serious problems. The site must be in the right area. It must also be in an area that doesn't make anyone feel threatened. When people feel threatened things can get ugly. Such is the case in Needles, CA. The proposed low-level waste dump scheduled to be built there is losing support. There is even an organized group formed to oppose it (Warren 1). People will use every resource in their power to keep a nuclear waste site from their land. They have every right to do so. Even though radwaste must be placed somewhere, it shouldn't be forced on anyone.

Palos Park Forest Preserve in Willow Springs is the site of the nation's first nuclear dumpsite. Federal inspectors are surveying 200 acres of the preserve for the ^{Ne} first time in thirty-four years. The reason for the survey, is because they found a lump of uranium and other radwaste (Secter 1). It is believed to be in the water supply of the area. Many thousands of people come to the preserve each year to hike and camp on the property. This can't be done without the risk of radiation poisoning.

Even though no solid figures exist for the total overall cost of cleaning up the nation's toxic waste dumpsites, but the estimates range as high as \$500 billion (Frantz & Douglas 31). But the most frightening thing is the fact that our homes are at risk. In Niagra Falls, New York is the "Love Canal." For eleven long years, toxic waste was dumped there. Occidental Petroleum's Hooker Chemical and Plastics Corporation buried some 21,800 tons of chemicals in an abandoned waterway from 1942-1953 (Griffin 26). The waterway was named after its former owner, William Love. The company then cov-

ered the canal and sold the property to the Niagra Falls Board of Education for one dollar in April 1953 (Griffin 26). During the mid-1950's, home construction in the area boomed and an elementary school and playing field were built on the site (Griffin 26). The rest is history. It is well known that the property is now up for sale. But the residents that once lived there are protesting against it.

The people could develop cancer and other ailments that the previous residents developed. How can you people be so heartless and cruel? You would let unsuspecting people move into these houses? The prices are so inexpensive that people can hardly pass it up. You would let people die because of money? That's not right at all and someone will answer for it.

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not under AEA -> but this is a foot of life in medicine, surgery, etc.

This is something that cannot be forgotten, and this is something that cannot be allowed to happen again. Our future depends on careful waste management; or our future will be an empty one.

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Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature:
Ian B. Carpenter
Ian B. Carpenter

cc: Los Angeles Times
New York Times
Washington Post

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