

From: Martha Gerdeman <martha.gerdeman@vanderbilt.edu>
To: OWFN_DO.owf5_po(AVC)
Date: Wed, Nov 24, 1999 9:27 AM
Subject: Release of radioactive material

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Dear Chairman Meserve:

I write to you to express my concern about the potential release of radioactive waste for recycling or indeed for any purpose. In the more than half a century that I've been around, I have come to the conclusion that here in the United States we are confused about the meaning of "beyond a shadow of a doubt." We seem to think that it applies only to proving that something...and always a profitable "something"...is harmful. Childhood asthma is skyrocketing, for example, because in the days when children breathed purer air, no one could prove the harm in breathing polluted air. And since it couldn't be proven, why should we cut into manufacturing profits by requiring expensive ways of eliminating emissions into the air?

My fear is that 20, 30, 40 years down the road, we will learn that the proposed uses of nuclear waste really were harmful and should never have occurred. Those of us who live in Tennessee are certainly aware of the growing evidence that merely having lived in Oak Ridge 50 years ago was harmful to the health, and now large numbers of Tennesseans are paying the price.

It seems to me that even the tiniest risk, however unlikely, is not worth the large numbers of dollars that stand to be made by this proposed release. I expect the people who have been elected or appointed to handle running *my* country to put the best interests of citizens above the selfish interests of a few.

Please use your influence to prevent any release of radioactive materials in whatever form. I really don't want my grandchildren to have to deal with its effects long after I am gone.

Sincerely yours,
Martha Gerdeman
Dickson, Tennessee

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