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Scheme to Import, Burn and Dump Italy's Nuclear Power Waste in USA Spurs Call for More Time for Public to Respond, Intervene

Public opposition is growing to a private company's proposal to ship radioactive waste from Italy to burn, "process," "recycle," transport and dump throughout the US.

Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) and more than 40 national and local organizations* are calling on the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission to give the public more time to exercise democracy--to learn about, respond, intervene and request hearings on a plan that could open the US borders to nuclear power waste from around the world. The groups want 90 days to investigate the license application to import nearly all of Italy's inventory of "low" and intermediate level radioactive wastes including decommissioning waste from closed nuclear power facilities.

Applications (Nos. IW023 and XW013) were submitted to the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission by EnergySolutions, a major handler of nuclear power and weapons waste in the US and around the world. The company buries radioactive waste in trenches in Utah and South Carolina and runs commercial "processing facilities" in Memphis and Oak Ridge, Tennessee which incinerate, melt, compact, shred, and "free release" radioactive lead, equipment, concrete and asphalt, some to regular solid waste dumps and for reuse and recycling, some as if not radioactive.

"Just as Tennesseans learned that their state Department of Environment and Conservation has been secretly giving licenses to nuclear companies to ship radioactive wastes from across the country to Tennessee to burn, melt, scrap, chop, shred and dump into regular trash dumps, the nation now learns that much of Italy's nuclear waste wants in as well," said Diane D'Arrigo of NIRS, coauthor of a report exposing that dumping.**

Because Tennessee allows these little-known activities, the international nuclear industry is taking advantage of the lax regulatory climate while the Nuclear Regulatory Commission appears poised to give its approval. Some of the remains of the processed waste could go into regular trash or recycling in Tennessee and the hotter radioactive refuse is targeted for burial in EnergySolutions' ditches in Utah. Utahans have been battling EnergySolutions' efforts to take even hotter waste there for years

"This is long-lasting, deadly waste that will not be rendered clean or safe in Tennessee nor isolated from the environment in Utah. In fact radioactivity will be emitted all along the transport routes, into the air, water and soil at the processing and disposal sites." D'Arrigo continued. "EnergySolutions stands to make big money by moving nuclear

waste around the world to the least resistant places. Now the US appears to be one of those places.”

State and federal elected officials from Tennessee, Texas, Kentucky, South Carolina, Utah and Wyoming have expressed concerns about and/or opposition to the proposal.

The public can give input to the NRC by emailing secy@nrc.gov and referring to Application # IW023.

* The extension request letter can be seen at <http://www.nirs.org/radwaste/llw/italyenergysolutionsrequest022808.pdf>

The signers include:

Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Takoma Park, MD
Public Citizen Washington, DC
Friends of the Earth, Columbia, SC
Environment America, Washington DC
Greenpeace, Washington, DC
Sierra Club's Nuclear Task Force
Delta Chapter Sierra Club, Louisiana
Tennessee Environmental Council
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Knoxville, TN
League of Women Voters of Louisiana
Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, Oak Ridge, TN
Citizens to ENDIT (End Nuclear Dumping in Tennessee), Murfreesboro, TN
Alliance for Affordable Energy, New Orleans, LA
Erwin Citizens Awareness Network, Erwin Tennessee
Defense Depot Memphis Tennessee Concerned Citizens Committee, Memphis, TN
BURNT, Nashville, TN
Advocates for Environmental Human Rights, New Orleans, LA
Catholic Committee of Appalachia
St Mary's Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Ministry
We the People, Inc., Rockwood, TN
SUN DAY Campaign
Citizens Utility Board of Wisconsin, Madison, WI
Beyond Nuclear, Takoma Park, MD
Western N. C. Physicians for Social Responsibility, Asheville, NC
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Los Angeles, CA
Physicians for Social Responsibility Washington, DC
International Physicians for Humanitarian Medicine
Citizen's Action for a Safe Environment, Leechburg, PA
Environmental Coalition on Nuclear Power, State College, Pennsylvania
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, New York
Air Water Earth Org., Lake Havasu City, Arizona
Citizens For Renewable Energy, Lion's Head, Ontario, Canada
Earth Day Coalition, Cleveland, OH
Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Californians for Radioactive Safeguards**Tri-Valley CAREs**, Livermore, CA**PRESS/NNWJ**, Ohio**Protect All Children's Environment**, Marion, North Carolina**Mankato Area Environmentalists**, Mankato, MN**Redwood Alliance**, Northern California**Pilgrim Watch**, Duxbury MA**Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility**, San Luis Obispo, CA**solartopia.org; freepress.org**, Columbus, OH**Chicago Media Watch & Nuclear Energy Information Service**, Chicago, IL**Healthy Environment Alliance Utah**, Salt Lake City, UT

** Out of Control – On Purpose: DOE's Dispersal of Radioactive Waste into Landfills and Consumer Products, <http://www.nirs.org/radwaste/outofcontrol/outofcontrol.htm>