

RESOLUTION AGAINST THE TRANSPORT OF LIQUID RADIOACTIVE WASTE

May 15, 2013

WHEREAS the U.S. Department of Energy plans to truck 23,000 litres of high-level radioactive liquid waste from Chalk River Laboratories (CRL), Ontario, to Savannah River Site (SRS), South Carolina, in a series of weekly shipments over a period of a year or more;

WHEREAS these shipments could begin as early as August 2013;

WHEREAS high-level radioactive liquid waste has never previously been transported over public roads and bridges in North America;

WHEREAS the high-level radioactive liquid waste contained in just one of the planned shipments is more than enough to ruin an entire city's water supply;

WHEREAS there have been no public environmental assessment hearings in Canada or the U.S., nor any other kind of public forum on either side of the border, to address the hazards of such shipments of liquid radioactive wastes over public roads and bridges;

WHEREAS there has been no public process to discuss alternatives to the proposed shipments of liquid radioactive waste over public roads and bridges, such as on-site solidification of the wastes prior to shipment – given that such solidification has been carried out routinely for all the high-level liquid waste that has been produced at Chalk River since 2003;

WHEREAS high-level radioactive waste is the most radioactive material on the planet, created by the irradiation of uranium and/or plutonium in a nuclear reactor;

WHEREAS high-level radioactive waste gives off such intense penetrating radiation that it remains unapproachable for centuries;

WHEREAS high-level radioactive waste remains extraordinarily radiotoxic for millennia;

WHEREAS high-level radioactive liquid waste is created when the solid high-level waste from a nuclear reactor is dissolved in nitric acid, resulting in a highly corrosive solution containing dozens of radiotoxic materials such as cesium-137, iodine-129, strontium-90;

WHEREAS the high-level radioactive liquid waste in question contains a significant amount of weapons-grade uranium (HEU = highly enriched uranium) – the same material that was used as a nuclear explosive in the first atomic bomb dropped in 1945;

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WHEREAS the principal justification for transporting the Chalk River liquid waste to the Savannah River Site is to rid Canada of the potential proliferation risk associated with the weapons-grade uranium that is still left in the liquid solution;

WHEREAS the Savannah River Site is one of the most radioactively contaminated sites in the entire DOE complex of nuclear weapons related facilities;

WHEREAS the continued operation of the aging H-Canyon reprocessing plant at the Savannah River Site to process the Chalk River liquid waste, as planned, will pose unnecessary safety risks, will add additional volumes of high-level radioactive waste into the already over-burdened SRS waste management system and will place unsustainable demands on the DOE budget;

WHEREAS all the non-proliferation objectives associated with the Chalk River liquid waste can be met by “denaturing” the weapons grade uranium on site at the Chalk River Laboratories so that it is no longer weapons-usable material and hence poses no further proliferation risk;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the organizations listed on the following pages:

- (1) are opposed in principle to any shipment of radioactive liquid waste over public roads and bridges, or on any navigable waterways, or by air, recognizing that such waste can be, has been and should be solidified so that it is far less accessible to the environment of living things;
- (2) urge the governments of Canada and the United States to halt the shipment of high-level radioactive liquid waste from Chalk River Laboratories to the Savannah River Site pending the outcome of full public consultations on the advisability and the potential adverse impacts of the proposed shipments, as well as alternative procedures to achieve the stated objectives for such shipments;
- (3) urge the governments of Canada and the United States, and the governments of all states, provinces, and municipalities, as well as the indigenous and sovereign governments of Native American Indian tribal peoples of the USA, and the several nations of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, to do everything in their power to disallow and prevent the shipment of liquid radioactive waste over public roads and bridges, or on any navigable waterways, or by air.

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