

January 8th, 2007

Senate Majority Leader, the Honorable Harry Reid
Speaker of the House, the Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Senate Minority Leader McConnell
House Minority Leader Boehner
The Honorable Senator Voinovich
The Honorable Senator Brown
The Honorable Congressman Denis Kucinich
The Honorable Congressman Jean Schmidt
The Honorable Congressman Zack Space
The Honorable Congressman Charlie Wilson
The Honorable Congressman Hobson
Senate Energy Committee Chair, the Honorable Jeff Bingaman
House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair, the Honorable John Dingell
Senate Energy Committee Ranking Member, the Honorable Pete Domenici
House Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member, Barton

Dear Member:

As we begin a new year of unified work for the benefit of our great nation, we ask your attention to a matter we find urgent. It has come to our attention that the Department of Energy and private groups acting under the names *ePIFNI* and *SONIC* are moving rapidly to bring our nation's most dangerous radioactive waste to a rural community with important cultural heritage in Appalachian Ohio.

This community has been named as a grant recipient under the Department of Energy's new Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP). We, the undersigned groups, oppose GNEP variously on grounds of national security, local security, degradation of our obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, our responsibility for environmental and cultural resource stewardship, endangerment of public health, and because it will further hurt our stature of leadership in the world. Thus it is that we protest the award of *any* grant under the GNEP program. Nonetheless, we find that the Piketon site warrants immediate attention.

GNEP is currently in the initial stages of program development, prior to official engagement with the public participation portion of the National Environmental Policy Act. News from the Piketon, Ohio, area reveals that a plan to move high-level nuclear waste (irradiated fuel) from commercial nuclear power reactors to the Piketon facility is already well developed to the point that expensive infrastructure changes to the site for the accommodation of irradiated fuel shipments have already been accomplished.

The plan to centralize high-level nuclear waste from commercial nuclear power predates the GNEP proposal. The Private Fuel Storage plan on the Skull Valley Goshute Indian Reservation in Utah was such a project, until recently ruled inappropriate by the Department of the Interior.

Nonetheless, to do so under the auspices of the federal government, and Piketon is a US DOE site, is not provided for under current law.

As a community of concerned citizens and organizations nationwide, we work together to oppose centralized interim storage of commercial high-level radioactive waste – at any site. As time goes by, the values we share grow only stronger:

- Concern for a scientifically sound, sustainable basis for long-term disposition of radioactive waste (Yucca Mountain does not meet this criterion)
- Concern for security of radioactive material and of any community that hosts it
- Recognition that the risks associated with the transport and centralization of irradiated fuel are *only* acceptable if moving the waste will greatly enhance the security and long-term sustainability of stewardship, as well as keep transport risks to a minimum

To date, all proposals for the “temporary” centralization of commercial high-level radioactive waste have not met these criteria. Today, the ever increasing concern for security in our nation, all by itself, is a basis to oppose moving high-level radioactive waste to a temporary site. In addition, the storage site adds one more, even bigger “target,” since the operating reactor sites will continue to generate waste, and if plans are approved, generate even more. Temporary storage will always dictate additional transport if, or when a permanent site is chosen. If no permanent site is found, the temporary site will, by default, become a permanent dump.

It is a long history, over several decades, where all the so-called “temporary” storage sites have targeted low-income, often Native American communities, or lands sacred to Native Americans.

Interim high-level storage is falsely sold as a jobs program to these poor communities, when the reality is that radioactive waste storage drives away more economic development than it brings.

Piketon is perhaps the worst example yet, near the very bottom of average income in Ohio, in one of Ohio’s richest and most sensitive ecological zones, and at the heart of Ohio’s complex of ancient Native American earthworks in the lower Scioto Valley, right on the ancient Scioto Trail.

If we preserve the status-quo and store waste for the **near-term** on nuclear utility sites, where it is generated, while not ideal, this at least ensures that multiple, corporate entities in diverse locations serve as interim hosts, and therefore collectively retain a stake in the quest for a permanent resolution. We urge that resources be used to increase safety and security for the waste where it is, pending a worthy long-term disposition. Whatever long-term solution for high-level nuclear waste is ultimately found, resources should now be focused on finding it, not diverted into quick-fix schemes that will neither be quick nor temporary, nor in accord with democratic values. Any solution must meet the clear requirements of federal law which ensure public access to information and public participation.

We the undersigned oppose the Piketon centralized waste storage plan and *any plan* to centralize high-level radioactive waste (irradiated fuel). Shipments cannot be secured during transport; centralization of this deadly waste merely adds one more problem, while resolving none.

We join with the people around the Piketon site in opposing this bad plan, and urge your immediate investigation and action.

Sincerely,

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Cc: The Honorable Ted Strickland Governor of Ohio

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Chairman Dale Klein, US Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner Jaczo
Commissioner Merrifield