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NEWS FROM NIRS

For Immediate Release
October 27, 2015

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Stop Fukushima Freeways Campaign Kicks Off

New Map shows DC AREA would be a Corridor for Extremely Dangerous Radioactive Nuclear Waste Shipments

*Press Telebriefing at 2 PM Eastern Oct 27 ****

Washington, DC—Over 250 intensely radioactive nuclear waste shipments would cross through the Washington DC metropolitan area and thousands more would travel across the roads, rails and waterways of the nation, if plans for the country's first, and scientifically indefensible, nuclear waste repository in Nevada move forward. Today, Nuclear Information and Resource Service released maps of the likely routes radioactive shipments would use, joining dozens of environmental and clean energy groups across the country. The groups want residents to weigh in with Congress and decision makers about the dangers.

According to the map, highly radioactive waste fuel from nuclear power reactors in Virginia and Maryland would pass through the DC area on railroad tracks next to Metro Rail trains, including passing through Union Station. *Each shipment contains several times more radioactive material than the Hiroshima bomb blast released*, with 20 to 50 tons of irradiated fuel assemblies in each canister. Department of Energy studies completed in the 1990s confirmed that accidents in transporting the waste to Yucca Mountain would be a certainty, due to the large number of shipments that would be required. The shipments would also be vulnerable to attack or sabotage along the hundreds or thousands of miles that each cask would travel.

“The DC area is not ready for mass transportation of nuclear waste—we can barely handle severe weather conditions” said Diane D’Arrigo of Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS). “First responders are not trained or equipped for high level radioactive waste accidents and a shipping campaign of this magnitude is unprecedented. We have all witnessed horrible oil train derailments and explosions in recent months. An accident involving tons of nuclear waste in Washington, DC could force thousands of people to evacuate their homes, schools, and businesses and radioactively-contaminate dozens of square miles,” D’Arrigo reported.

Some in Congress want to force a nuclear waste dump to open in Nevada, over President Obama’s and the state’s objections as well as that of the Western Shoshone Nation. The president has defunded the proposed Yucca Mountain repository since 2010, effectively abandoning the controversial project, while Nevada is certain that the site is not suitable for storing nuclear waste and opposes the project. Nevada controls land and water rights the federal government would need to complete the project. To overcome that obstacle, Congress would need to enact a law overriding the state’s rights. Doing so would then open the door for the nuclear waste shipments to begin.

“Congress should stop wasting time and money on Yucca Mountain which should have been disqualified long ago for its technical inability to isolate nuclear waste,” said Tim Judson, NIRS Executive Director. “It is unconscionable to risk the lives of DC area residents transporting nuclear waste through our neighborhoods and railways just to dump it at Yucca Mountain, where we know it will leak anyway. We need real isolation of nuclear waste, and we are never going to get there until Congress officially cancels Yucca Mountain and moves on. Until then, the waste can be stored more securely where it is now, without putting it on our roads, rails and waterways, traveling through our communities,” concluded Judson.

NIRS is calling on Mayor Bowser and Governors McAuliffe and Hogan to oppose Yucca Mountain and prevent transportation of nuclear waste until there is a scientifically proven, environmentally sound, and socially responsible long-term management plan. The nuclear waste problem can never truly be resolved until nuclear power plants are permanently shut down and stop generating radioactive material. New reactors would only exacerbate the problem: more

dump sites would need to be created, and the transportation of lethal atomic waste would have to continue indefinitely.

Large-scale nuclear waste transport would also occur if, as some in Congress advocate, a "centralized interim storage" site for high-level radioactive waste were created. In that case, the waste would either have to move twice (once to the interim site, and then to a permanent site), thus doubling the risks or the "interim" site would become a de facto permanent waste dump--without going through the necessary scientific characterization.

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MORE INFORMATION:

Stop Fukushima Freeways WEBSITE:

<http://www.nirs.org/fukushimafreeways/stopfukushimafreeways.htm>

****** PRESS TELEBRIEFING:***

Tele-Briefing for Media

Today Oct 27th from 2—3 pm Eastern time

Call: 605-562-3140 and enter code: 723281#

Join us TODAY (10/27) for a Tele-Briefing with national experts, Dr Fred Dilger of Black Mountain Research, author of the nuclear transport maps, and Dr Marvin Resnikoff of Radioactive Waste Management Associates who has done extensive work on nuclear waste containers, shipments and accident risks.

Representative Transportation Routes for the District of Columbia

