



Nuclear Information & Resource Service
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Phase Out Nuclear Energy. Promote Renewable Energy. Respect Democracy!

October 28, 2005

Honorable Roh Moo-Hyun
President of South Korea

Mr. President:

Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) works in the United States with communities that have experience with nuclear power, and radioactive waste, including so-called “low-level” waste. NIRS also works as an international network with World Information Service on Energy (WISE) serving communities around the world who are directly impacted by radioactive waste. This letter is in support of people in South Korea who are concerned about anti-democratic, and unsafe processes being pursued by your government to build a so-called “mid-” and “low”-radioactive waste dump in your country.

It is important for you to realize that no nation has been able to ensure permanent isolation of radioactive waste. These harmful materials, which are very difficult to perceive in our environment, will nonetheless cause cancer and other diseases, miscarriage, sterility, and birth defects for millennia. The full period of hazard is 10 — 20 half-lives, which for many components of the so-called “low-level waste” is millions of years. In order to protect your people and your future generations, you will have to spend enormous amounts of money to monitor and safe-keep the waste. When this is not done, you are knowingly creating sacrifice zones within your nation. Is this safe? Is this clean? Is this renewable? Nuclear waste is unavoidable in the use of nuclear energy. Nuclear waste is not clean and sustainable, but costly and dangerous — even deadly.

It is neither appropriate nor fair to offer communities large sums of money in exchange, not only for their health, but also that of their children, and their children’s children. The Korean government should instead listen to its citizens who are calling for the phase out nuclear power plants and development of truly safe, clean, and sustainable renewable energy sources. There is much expertise available (for instance Rocky Mountain Institute, www.rmi.org) to assist with reduction in energy use, while delivering the same level of industrial output and quality of life. Saving energy is far cheaper than generating new power, or dealing with a costly nuclear waste problem. Since this is a global challenge, we urge you to take advantage of environmentally sound, economically conservative and socially equitable solutions.

Please listen to the wise recommendations of your own citizens who are calling upon you to stop the procedures you are following to choose a nuclear waste site. Please know that once democracy is sacrificed on behalf of one industry, it is next to impossible to regain it. The health of a nation depends upon both clean water, soil and air, and clean, democratic processes for equitable decision making. We urge you to work for the health of your people, now and in the future.

Thank you for considering our information, and taking action to protect your people.

Sincerely,

Mary Olson
Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Washington, DC USA