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## [U.S. | Environment & Forest Defense](#)

### **UNITED STATES TO BECOME INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR WASTE DUMP!**

by Leo Leonardo

*Monday Nov 17th, 2008 2:02 AM*

**URGENT ACTION ALERT!** Condemned by health and environmental groups across the country, GNEP means foreign nuclear waste imported and "reprocessed" in the USA. This is a national issue! We need a big national outcry!!! Washington, Oregon, Idaho, New Mexico, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, South Carolina, and all our sister states! Cold War nuclear sites are thirty years behind on clean-up! NO foreign waste!

#### Global Nuclear Energy Partnership

In the dying throes of the Bush administration, one last environmental disaster is being foisted on the public. With GNEP, the Pacific Northwest, Hanford Nuclear Reservation and Idaho Falls, the Southwest and sites in the Eastern USA could all get a lot more nuclear waste (both from within and outside the country) and dirty nuclear waste 'reprocessing' plants, "recycling" reactors, and "advanced fuel cycle research facilities"—all verbal green-washings of very dirty processes. The Department of Energy (DOE) is holding public hearings on GNEP in November through early December, 2008, final hearing on December 9 in Washington DC in a rush to push this awful idea in under the wire.

Thursday, November 20, 7:00 p.m.

Hilton Garden Inn

700 Lindsay Boulevard

Idaho Falls, IDAHO 83402

Tuesday, November 18, 7:00 p.m.

Best Western Hood River Inn – Gorge Room

1108 East Marina Way

Hood River, OREGON 97031

Monday, November 17, 7:00 p.m.

Red Lion Hotel

2525 North 20th Avenue

Pasco, WASHINGTON 99301

Monday, November 17, 7:00 p.m.

Lea County Event Center

5101 North Lovington-Hobbs Hwy

Hobbs, NEW MEXICO 88240

Tuesday, November 18, 9:00 a.m.  
Pecos River Village Conference Center Carousel House  
711 Muscatel Avenue  
Carlsbad, NEW MEXICO 88220

Tuesday, November 18, 7:00 p.m.  
Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell Occupational Technology Center Seminar Room 124  
20 West Mathis  
Roswell, NEW MEXICO 88130

Thursday, November 20, 7:00 p.m.  
Hilltop House Best Western  
400 Trinity Drive (at Central)  
Los Alamos, NEW MEXICO 87544

Monday, December 1, 7:00 p.m.  
Carson Four Rivers Center Myre River Room  
100 Kentucky Avenue  
Paducah, KENTUCKY 42003

Tuesday, December 2, 7:00 p.m.  
Vern Riffe Career Technology Center  
175 Beaver Creek Road  
Piketon, OHIO 45661

Tuesday, December 2, 7:00 p.m.  
New Hope Center  
602 Scarboro Rd, Corner of New Hope and Scarboro Roads  
Oak Ridge, TENNESSEE 37830

Thursday, December 4, 7:00 p.m.  
Holiday Inn Bolingbrook  
205 Remington Blvd.  
Bolingbrook, ILLINOIS 60440

Thursday, December 4, 7:00 p.m.  
Aiken Technical College, Building 700 – Amphitheater  
2276 Jefferson Davis Highway  
Graniteville, SOUTH CAROLINA 29829

Tuesday, December 9, 1:00 p.m.  
Holiday Inn Capitol  
550 C Street SW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20024

## THERE IS A LOT YOU CAN DO

ATTEND A HEARING and let DOE know a LOT of people do NOT want GNEP.

COMMENT BY MAIL Letters due before December 16. Mail letters to:  
Francis Schwartz, GNEP PEIS Document Manager  
Office of Nuclear Energy, NE-5, DOE  
1000 Independence Ave. S.W.  
Washington, DC 20585.

## COMMENT ONLINE

<http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocumentDetail&o=0900006480744445> click on above link, then click on the yellow button next to Add Comments

AND WRITE YOUR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION.

## STRATEGY

Acquaint yourself with GNEP in Wikipedia <http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/GNEP>

Or the 81 page Department of Energy GNEP SUMMARY <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocumentDetail&o=0900006480744445>

Or full 960 page DOE GNEP document [http://www.gnep.energy.gov/pdfs/GNEP\\_PEIS.pdf](http://www.gnep.energy.gov/pdfs/GNEP_PEIS.pdf)

Or read article below (recommended) Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, 2008 <http://www.ananuclear.org/Portals/0/documents/Fact%20Sheets/GNEP%20FS%202007.pdf>

## TALKING POINTS AT THE END

### GLOBAL NUCLEAR ENERGY PARTNERSHIP: ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, AND SECURITY RISKS

The Department of Energy (DOE) has asked Congress for \$302 million in fiscal year 2009 for the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP), which it also calls the Advanced Fuel Cycle Initiative (AFCI). GNEP is a Bush Administration scheme to revive the dangerous practice of reprocessing irradiated nuclear fuel. GNEP would endanger the environment, encourage nuclear bomb-making, squander U.S. taxpayer dollars, and deepen the nuclear waste problem.

Under the GNEP plan, some countries would supply and fuel nuclear reactors for other, as-yet-unnamed countries that would agree to forgo uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing. Once the fuel rods were irradiated, they would be sent back to the suppliers for eventual reprocessing.

Reprocessing is the fundamental link between a nuclear reactor and a plutonium bomb. Irradiated, or “spent,” fuel is separated into its constituent ingredients, usually using acid. One of the ingredients, plutonium, can be used to make new reactor fuel—or nuclear bombs. Since separated plutonium encourages nuclear weapons proliferation, President Ford halted the export of reprocessing technologies. President Carter outlawed U.S. commercial reprocessing in 1976.

Although the domestic ban was lifted more than 20 years ago, reprocessing is so expensive that the U.S. nuclear power industry has not resumed it. While the French reprocessing program of the state-owned company Areva is often presented as an example to follow, its financing is totally dependent on state support and by forcing a reluctant utility to accept plutonium fuel.

### GNEP INCREASES CONTAMINATION

Reprocessing produces large amounts of very dangerous waste that is intensely radioactive, toxic, thermally hot, and difficult to contain. The tanks used to store this liquid high-level waste must be cooled requiring water, hence more water pollution, or the waste will explode. In 1957, one such tank exploded in Russia, contaminating 6,000 square miles. Liquid high-level waste from Cold War reprocessing presents the greatest contamination threat and cleanup challenge in the U.S. nuclear weapons complex. At Hanford, Washington; Savannah River Site, South Carolina; and the Idaho National Laboratory, millions of gallons of liquid waste sit in aging “tank farms,” all of which have leaked, threatening crucial water resources.

### GNEP ENCOURAGES NUCLEAR BOMB-MAKING

GNEP proponents claim it is a way to control nuclear materials proliferation, but the opposite is true. Irradiated fuel that has not been reprocessed is “self protecting” because the fuel is heavy, bulky, and intensely radioactive. But separated plutonium is a concentrated powder, and less than 20 pounds are required to make a bomb. Loss or theft of this dangerous material is hard to guard against in the complex plutonium separation factories because it is very difficult to track plutonium through each step of the process.

One GNEP plan is to “burn” reprocessed plutonium in “fast” reactors, which are prone to accidents and cost up to half again as much as most of the reactors used for electricity in the U.S. today. Worldwide, fewer than 20 fast reactors have produced electricity. Use of fast reactors and reprocessing only adds to the current worldwide surplus of separated, weapons-usable plutonium, which already stands at 250 tons – enough to make approximately 30,000 nuclear bombs.

### GNEP WASTES BILLIONS OF DOLLARS

DOE has not provided a total cost estimate for GNEP, but in 1996, the National Academy of Sciences estimated that reprocessing the current U.S. spent fuel inventory could easily add \$100 billion to our nuclear tab. Each of the new fast reactors would cost several billion more.

Approximately \$150 billion more will be needed to bring some level of cleanup to the three U.S.

weapons sites and the commercial site in West Valley, NY, that previously reprocessed spent fuel. These are all costs the taxpayer—not the nuclear power industry—bears.

## CANNOT SOLVE U.S. NUCLEAR WASTE PROBLEM

As its efforts to open a spent fuel and high-level waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, are clearly failing, DOE is trying to paint GNEP as a “recycling” solution. But reprocessing spent fuel does not conserve resources or reduce waste. If spent fuel is reprocessed once, as it is in France, it does not appreciably reduce the space needed in a deep geologic repository. At the same time, it produces other radioactive wastes that remain hazardous for thousands of years. Even if spent fuel would be repeatedly reprocessed and burned in dangerous fast reactors, there would still be waste that requires geologic disposal.

## CURRENT SITUATION

DOE says more than 20 other countries are interested in participating in GNEP, though no binding agreements have been reached. The Bush administration plans to make GNEP decisions in 2008, even though Congress has not authorized the program and, in the FY 2008 Omnibus Appropriation, specifically prohibited using any funds “for facility construction for technology demonstration of commercialization.”

DOE’s plan goes directly against the 2007 recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences, which is sharply critical of the program on nearly every front.

Another provision of the FY 2009 Budget Request would extend the \$18.5 billion in loan guarantees for new nuclear power plants currently appropriated through September 30, 2009 for two more years. Congress has already provided about a billion dollars in production tax credits, up to \$2 billion in risk insurance for new nuclear power plants, and billions more for nuclear reactor licensing and new technologies.

The loan guarantees to new nuclear plants, which could not operate until 2015, should not be extended to provide even further subsidies. Instead, any federal loan guarantees should be for renewable energy and efficiency programs that produce and save energy in the next few years.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Transfer the \$302 million FY 2009 Budget Request for the GNEP/AFCI programs to DOE’s waste cleanup program.
- Do not extend the \$18.5 billion in nuclear power loan guarantees

## THE GNEP ISSUE

Two years ago, the Department of Energy (DOE) received millions to do an environmental impact study as regards this Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) idea across the United States. Now, DOE is holding meetings at nuclear sites across America until December 9, when the last hearing is held in Washington DC, to present the GNEP plan to the affected sites for public comment. Hearings are to be held at Hobbs, New Mexico, Carlsbad, New Mexico, Roswell, New Mexico, Los Alamos, New Mexico, Pasco, Washington, Hood River, Oregon, Paducah, Kentucky, Idaho Falls, Idaho, Piketon, Ohio, Bolingbrook, Illinois, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and Granville, South Carolina. All those places would be directly affected by the GNEP proposal, whether they are the storage sites of a lot more waste trucked in or the reprocessing sites of nuclear waste. Reprocessing uranium is very dirty, generating a lot more nuclear waste. And for what? The plan is more nuclear reactors nationally and internationally. The corporate plan is to grow the nuclear industry across the board.

Along with Hobbs and Roswell, New Mexico, Hanford Nuclear Reservation in the state of Washington (570 square Cold War nuclear waste polluted miles adjacent to the Columbia River--the lifeblood of the Pacific Northwest) is being considered as a site to receive very large additional amounts of nuclear waste from within and outside of the USA, which same toxic waste is then supposed to be 'reprocessed' onsite. Reprocessing nuclear waste to yield fuel for new reactors is greenwashed as 'recycling.' The DOE wants to do something about the accumulation of nuclear waste from the USA's rapidly aging nuclear power plants and munitions making sites currently stored onsite at many locations. DOE has been very expensively fighting legal battles for decades over this issue. Additionally, all this waste all over America has people angry, (the 'political logjam') and much less likely to agree to building more nuclear power plants.

Lyman and Von Hippel in an article "Reprocessing Revisited: The International Dimensions of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership" [http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008\\_04/LymanVonHippel](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_04/LymanVonHippel) offer the following explanation:

"In a February 2008 speech, Dennis Spurgeon, assistant secretary of energy for nuclear energy, argued that 'closing the fuel cycle is essential for expansion of nuclear power in the U.S. and around the world.' This assertion is highly questionable because reprocessing is 10 times more costly than spent fuel storage. If nuclear power is to become more widely competitive, its cost must decrease, not increase. Spurgeon's view, however, reflects the belief of GNEP supporters in the need to bypass the political logjams that block permanent spent fuel storage, which they see as a chief impediment to a major global increase in nuclear power. In the absence of geological repositories, reprocessing plants provide an alternative destination for the spent fuel accumulating at nuclear power plants.

"This change in the U.S. attitude toward reprocessing is at odds with the welcome, recent global trend of countries abandoning reprocessing because it is costly, and complicates waste disposal rather than facilitating it. The net result of even a partial success of the Bush administration's policy would be a reversal in the decline in the number of countries with stockpiles of separated plutonium, thereby undermining the nonproliferation regime. Hopefully, Congress and the next administration will try to

reverse the damage done by the Bush administration's ill-considered promotion of reprocessing...."

Meanwhile, towns downriver from various sites, and every other American living in proximity to nuclear waste sites all over the nation, are being distracted from demanding clean-up of our existing sites by having to fight this new onslaught of pathological science originating with an international group of nuclear corporations eager to build more plants, as well as re-processing plants, whose only goal is the bottom line.

International corporations are partnering up, delighted that Bush gave them an in—the GNEP—to further milk the American taxpayer. Nuclear energy is heavily subsidized, as is the building of power plants, and the building of potential 'reprocessing plants.' That particular cash cow has gotten a lot thinner this year, but that will not stop the corporate lobbying. Likely local workers eager for jobs will be flocking to their DOE meeting highly supportive of GNEP. In the Pacific Northwest alone, Hanford's toxic tanks continue leaking into the Columbia River, the most irradiated river in the Western Hemisphere. The Savannah River is poisoned. So is the Ohio. And the Tennessee. And the Rio Grande. Fresh water rivers across the USA are polluted as a result of nuclear projects of various kinds. Downriver folks and the population at large, much more numerous than local workers, should not have long term nuclear waste pollution forced on them by people with a clear short term vested financial interest in the GNEP outcome.

The DOE pays for the clean-up with your tax dollars, now going on 40 billion PLUS dollars at Hanford Nuclear Reservation ALONE--hello Colorado, what was the price tag for the mess north of Denver? can anybody hike across the land polluted by nuclear tests in southern California? what's blowing in the wind near Las Vegas? what about New York and Love Canal? Twenty years behind schedule, FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE COLD WAR TOXINS STILL NOT SAFELY STORED, leaking into rivers, blowing away with the dust. There are many similar sites across the USA, (see link at the end of this post) though Hanford is by far the worst in a string of awful toxic sites. See the Hanford Watch website <http://www.hanfordwatch.org/> to see just how bad it is.

Why is the DOE considering adding further to the waste burden of the United States, at the risk of focusing efforts and money away from clean-up which is continually delayed because of insufficient funds?

As far as the USA's national nuclear waste is concerned, not even considering the incoming international waste that's proposed, Lyman and Van Hippel suggest the answer is that as long as waste is stored all over the country, there will be big opposition to more nuclear power plants. But consolidate the waste from all over the country to a few sites for "reprocessing," and you can build more power plants with less local opposition. Yucca Mountain in Nevada, the underground storage facility which was to hold all this accumulated waste (factually it could hold only about half what there is anyway) may not open. Hence, an urgency felt by DOE to do something.

Comes now Bush's GNEP and the nuclear corporate lobby, an international clutch of companies including USA corporations.

The global warming crisis has everyone searching for carbon free energy, and nuclear is being touted suddenly as 'clean,' giving the nuclear menace a chance to rise again like a phoenix out of the ashes. Corporate marketing along with the DOE gleefully under-educates the public with the half truth of nuclear energy's 'low carbon footprint!' Never mind that these processes pollute soil, air, and water for millennia. Mammals and most living organisms simply can't mutate fast enough to live in a world polluted with radionuclides. They get sick and die of cancer, heart disease, and weakened immune systems. They die before attaining the age of reproduction or miscarry into extinction. The effect is cumulative. We are already losing species worldwide at a rate not seen before in geologic time.

Reprocessing just spreads the waste around more! Quote from Oregon Senator Ron Wyden's office, "Nuclear waste is like King Midas on steroids. Everything it touches makes more waste."

The USA needs to focus on real clean-up technology, not smearing the nuclear waste around. No building new nuclear plants. No reprocessing. No more building of nuclear bombs. The US already has thousands and their uranium bomb pits do not wear out with aging. We are awash in plutonium. Hanford Nuclear Reservation spends millions a year just guarding one metric ton of plutonium from terrorists. Why break that down into smaller units more easily accessed by terrorists?

Phase out nuclear altogether and subsidize solar and wind at the current rate of nuclear energy. Immediately promote more environmentally sound machinery including cars and environmentally sound energy.

Carefully review the ramifications of quick fix energy solutions thrown into the breach of global warming hysteria. (Another example of bad science contributing to hunger and environmental degradation worldwide and a complete boondoggle benefiting chemical corporations is ethanol in your gas tank! Ethanol is energy in-efficient <http://petroleum.berkeley.edu/papers/Biofuels/MyBiofuelPapersTop.htm> )

Do we want large amounts of nuclear waste—domestic and foreign—trucking down the highways? Or getting into the water and air as a result of reprocessing? Or getting into the hands of terrorists en route? Do we want more waste from new nuclear power plants, the remains of so-called "recycled" fuel? Why on earth should the United States pollute its own lands further with imported nuclear waste and more uranium bomb pit processing?

The USA does not need more nuclear bombs; the USA can already blow up the planet. Bomb pits do not wear out. No more depleted uranium bombs used in wars either. The environmental pollution wrought by the USA's production of depleted uranium weapons here at home, and their explosion in other countries, is tremendous. Depleted uranium weapons means genocide on civilians. The leukemia count spikes in countries where the US army uses depleted uranium weapons to blow up tanks—toxic waste sits in the dust, travels across deserts, and ultimately is blown around the planet. Support international policies limiting, dismantling, and phasing out nuclear weapons, depleted uranium weapons, and power plants.



## SOME TALKING POINTS BELOW.....

## First, from the Union of Concerned Scientists

**Risk of Nuclear Terrorism/Proliferation:** Reprocessing separates plutonium and uranium from other nuclear waste contained in spent nuclear fuel. The separated plutonium can be used to fuel reactors, but also can be used in nuclear weapons and therefore poses a major risk of nuclear terrorism. Less than 20 pounds of plutonium is needed to make a nuclear weapon. The current U.S. practice of maintaining plutonium in large, heavy, and highly radioactive spent fuel assemblies makes it nearly impossible to steal. Reprocessing would change that. A recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report specifically noted that advanced technologies for reprocessing spent nuclear fuel would pose a “greater risk of proliferation in comparison with direct disposal” in underground storage. However, the DOE has not yet made public the GNEP Nonproliferation Assessment that it has prepared. The public should insist that the DOE issue the Nonproliferation Assessment for public comment before making a “record of decision” to proceed with GNEP.

**Nuclear Waste Issue Not Remedied:** The GNEP plan for reprocessing is not necessary to support nuclear power expansion and, in fact, would be counterproductive by saddling nuclear power with additional costs and risks. Reprocessing will not reduce the volume of nuclear waste generated and will not eliminate the need for a long-term underground storage solution. The nuclear power industry has been unwilling to invest private funding to support reprocessing. The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) believes that spent nuclear fuel can instead be safely stored in dry casks at existing reactor sites for decades. Indeed, reprocessing will require significantly more disposal capacity for low-level radioactive waste according to the draft PEIS.

**Taxpayers and Ratepayers Will Spend Billions of Dollars:** According to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in 1996, the total cost of a reprocessing and fast reactor program could be more than \$700 billion (in 2007 dollars). A more recent estimate from a government scientist found the cost associated with building and operating a plant capable of reprocessing all the spent fuel generated by the current U.S. reactor fleet would be \$3 billion to \$4.5 billion per year. Due to the drawbacks to reprocessing, Congress has significantly reduced the administration’s funding requests over the last two years, which has led the DOE to abandon its initial plans to build a number of reprocessing facilities throughout the country. However, hundreds of millions have already been poured into the program and several sites around the country, including Roswell and Hobbs in New Mexico and Hanford in Washington, have conducted preliminary feasibility studies for hosting reprocessing plants and other GNEP facilities. If reprocessing goes forward, only sites that have already been studied will be considered for new facility construction.

## MORE TALKING POINTS OR USE YOUR OWN....

1. The American taxpayer whose dollar heavily subsidizes nuclear energy projects of all kinds pays out the nose. Not even factoring in the cost of down-the-line clean-up, nuclear energy is highly cost ineffective. Clean-up efforts as a result of GNEP are paid for by your tax dollars long after the power from those projects was used. We need consumer rate relief!

2. Nuclear subsidy dollars should be diverted to safer forms of energy
3. Nuclear plants require water for cooling. Can we risk the earth's clean water?
4. This plan includes importing nuclear waste from other countries. We still haven't cleaned up the Cold War waste fifty years later. Radionuclides from waste are spreading around (wind, water, biosphere) and affecting public health.
5. 'Reprocessing' is much dirtier and more dangerous than leaving the waste onsite. Nuclear waste is safer stored in situ until we can figure out a truly sound technology for dealing with it.
6. Nuclear waste will be trucked down our highways....
7. GNEP could involve importing waste from other countries. Do we want nuclear waste barged up the Columbia, going through the locks, and up the dams? Or up the Savannah or down the Ohio? Do we want to pollute the USA even further with nuclear waste from other countries that pay us to take it? Do we want mega ports in Mexico to take it in and then truck it up some potential Trans American highway? Can the Southwest afford to pollute its precious water with nuclear waste from "re-processing"?!
8. Encourage cleaner energy like solar and wind. Nuclear is not 'clean.'
9. Large corporations should not determine environmental health. The government has to step in with laws and to hold corporations accountable. Why were corporations never charged for the mess they created in New Mexico, San Francisco, Hanford, Washington, Fernald, Ohio, Oakridge, TN, New York, etc? Why is the government protecting nuclear corporations from prosecution? The burden of proof as regards products and corporate accountability is too great in the USA, deliberately kept that way to cater to corporate interests.
10. Selling nuclear plants to India, approved by Congress this year, and to China as approved under the Clinton administration, was a terrible step for the world environment. These countries and their people will ultimately suffer greatly because of this step backwards, instead of adopting solar and wind energy.
11. French company, Areva, is building an uranium enrichment plant 18 miles west of Idaho Falls. Why? What do we need enriched uranium for? Areva is also building a MOX plant at Savannah River. Areva, formerly Cogema, has a terrible history of safety violations. Why should a French company pollute our country? Don't we have enough American corporations to pollute America already? Why should the American taxpayer enrich the French and pay for polluting projects? Get Areva out of America.
12. Nuclear energy will hinder reliable, sustainable energy policies worldwide. Under the GNEP, countries like Turkey (the "breadbasket" of the region with plenty of sun for solar (!) and earthquakes) would be considered as a supplier country meaning that it would be forced to "to supply nuclear fuel to receiver states in exchange for a reliable and affordable nuclear fuel supply." Instead of simply

converting to solar country-wide. Turkey would have to buy energy from nuclear power plants in other countries. From: [http://www.psr.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Analysis\\_Turkey&printer\\_friendly=1](http://www.psr.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Analysis_Turkey&printer_friendly=1)

13. Physicians for Social Responsibility is highly critical of GNEP. "GNEP will ...worsen the radioactive waste disposal problem and...make the United States the dumping ground for nuclear wastes from the other participating nations. If nuclear power growth is tripled to mitigate global warming, the "take back" policy of GNEP would mean that the U.S. could import enough reactor spent fuel to fill more than a dozen Yucca Mountain, Nevada repositories. Under the administration's plan, highly radioactive strontium-90 and cesium-137 would be separated for near surface disposal after 300 years – resulting in the largest source of high-heat radioactivity in the United States and possibly the world." From [http://www.psr.org/site/DocServer/GNEP\\_FACT\\_SHEET.pdf?docID=6043](http://www.psr.org/site/DocServer/GNEP_FACT_SHEET.pdf?docID=6043)

14. Global warming and weather changes make all nuclear sites vulnerable (precluding the building of more nuclear plants) to forces of nature such as earthquakes, fire, and floods. In the last ten years, major fires at Hanford and Los Alamos released radionuclides into the air and cost taxpayers billions to fight.

15. Funding for GNEP projects is very unclear. Projects are uninsurable against accidents, according to Warren Buffett.

16. The National Academy of Sciences is sharply critical of DOE's plan on nearly every front. See: <http://www.nationalacademies.org/morenews/20071029.html>

17. NUCLEAR INDUSTRY WORKERS HAVE A SHORT TERM VESTED FINANCIAL INTEREST AND SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO DECIDE ISSUES OF LONG TERM ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION AFFECTING MILLIONS, GENERATIONS DOWN THE LINE, AND DOWNRIVER. Communities with many nuclear related jobs will lobby heavily at DOE GNEP hearings. Communities in the area and downriver, across the United States, have to make a big noise to compete. Last year, Idaho Falls nuclear workers organized en masse to lobby at their 2007 DOE GNEP hearing. "In March 2007 over 700 people from eastern Idaho stunned Department of Energy officials by turning out to support the location of GNEP advanced nuclear energy facilities in eastern Idaho. It was the biggest show of support in the nation for the program. The entirely unexpected bonus was that the massive outpouring of support for nuclear energy caught the attention of French nuclear giant Areva which eventually decided to locate a \$2.4 billion uranium enrichment plant 18 miles west of town. While Areva's new plant has nothing to do with GNEP, or federal nuclear energy programs, the support of communities throughout eastern Idaho for the project was clearly signaled by ...the GNEP hearing." From: [http://nuclearstreet.com/blogs/idaho\\_samizdat\\_nuke\\_notes/default.aspx](http://nuclearstreet.com/blogs/idaho_samizdat_nuke_notes/default.aspx)

18. Even in this awful economy, the prospect of new nuclear related jobs should not determine policies affecting long-term pollution.

Scrap the entire GNEP set of proposals.

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[http://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear\\_power/reactor-map/embedded-flash-map.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear_power/reactor-map/embedded-flash-map.html)

Link to an interactive map that lets you track nuclear site safety in the USA

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**WBFO News**

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## **New Rail-Trail Planned for Southtowns**

Mark Scott

ORCHARD PARK, NY (2008-11-10) Plans are underway in the Southtowns to convert a 27-mile former rail line into a multi-use trail. The Buffalo-Pittsburgh Railroad has received federal government approval to abandon the rail corridor that stretches from Orchard Park to West Valley. Once the railroad removes the steel rails and wooden ties from the right-of-way, a new not-for-profit agency will begin work on the conversion.

Anne Bergantz is an Orchard Park resident who is involved with the newly organized Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail group. She says the group will develop plans to build, manage and maintain the trail.

In the year 2000, there were 65 rail trails covering some 700 miles in New York. Today, there are more than 100 trails totaling 1,100. On Monday's Buffalo Rising Roundtable on WBFO, Phil Haberstro of the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and Western New York says plans are in the making for other rail trails in the area.

Both Haberstro and Bergantz says the trails often boost property values and bring new economic vitality to towns and villages.

Click the audio player above to hear Mark Scott's story now or use your podcasting software to download it to your computer or iPod.

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# Public health risk at WVDP found to be below applied radiation dose limits

By NATALIE CONDOR-SMITH  
*Journal Correspondent*

November 6, 2008

Paul Bembia gave a presentation on behalf of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), on Wednesday, Oct. 23 to the West Valley Citizen Task Force (WVCTF).

WVCTF is an 18-member advisory group that was formed in 1998 to help in the development of closure options for the West Valley Nuclear Demonstration facility.

Bembia's presentation focused on the results of a quantitative risk assessment analysis prepared by NYSERDA for what is known as the State-Licensed Disposal Area (SDA).

The assessment was recommended by Dr. B. John Garrick who is the chairperson of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Review Panel as well as other Boards.

"A Quantitative Risk Assessment (QRA) is a probabilistic risk assessment that looks at the radiation risk to the public from the SDA over a 30-year period, assuming continued operation of the SDA under its current administrative controls," said Bembia.

"Some components of the SDA QRA are a complete and structured set of 'What can go wrong' scenarios; the likelihood of occurrence of each 'What can go wrong scenario'; and radiation dose resulting from each 'What can go wrong' scenario," he continued.

The 'What can go wrong' scenarios were divided into two categories: Disruptive events such as earthquakes or severe storms that can cause an immediate change to the site, and nominal events and processes which occur continuously over the life of the facility

such as groundwater flow.

Many threat scenarios were evaluated and included in the analysis such as fires, air craft crashes, certain flooding events, and many more.

An equally long list of threats were evaluated and eliminated from further detailed analysis such as volcanic activity, drought and nearby facility accidents.

It is determined that the risk to the public from the facility is dominated by five scenarios which account for 97 percent of the overall risk from the facility.

Each of these scenarios involves lateral ground water flow and water overflow from trenches. However, in order for these risks to become reality, certain other conditions have to be in place such as there being a precipitation event over a 14-day period exceeding nine inches, with at least one storm severe enough to erode a gully, allowing water infiltration to fill trenches, which would then overflow, allowing contaminated water to enter adjacent streams.

In conclusion, the QRA results confirm that the public health risk from operating the SDA for the next 30 years is well below widely applied radiation dose limits.

Bembia also reported that, "There is extremely high confidence that potential releases of radioactive materials from the SDA which may result in a one-year dose to any member of the public of 100 millirems or more, will occur much less often than once in 30 years." (The average person in the US receives an annual dose from natural radioactive sources of approximately 100 to 400 millirems). However, this low level of risk will be maintained only if NYSERDA continues to operate the SDA according to its current physical and administrative controls.

## Another Voice / Energy

# Nuclear power freighted with troubling consequences

By James Rauch

Updated: 11/08/08 6:55 AM

In last Sunday's Nature Watch column, Gerry Rising displayed his own admitted lack of atomic energy expertise.

Nuclear power is not carbon-free. It consumes more fossil fuels in the uranium mining, refining, fuel fabrication and actual power plant construction and operation processes per unit of installed generating capacity than do the trio of the cleanest alternative sources — wind, geothermal and solar — in their production and deployment. A dollar invested in wind produces more energy, leads to a greater reduction in carbon emissions and creates more jobs than one invested in nuclear power, according to experts.

In addition, as Rising admits, nuclear power has other significant, albeit frequently glossed-over, externalized costs and risks. These include the increasingly problematic issue of nuclear weapons proliferation, the large consequences of accidents and taxpayer liability for them, and the unsolved problem of safely managing nuclear waste and decommissioning old reactors. Sandia National Laboratory has estimated the cost of a worst-case scenario accident in this country at \$700 billion. Yet, through the Price Anderson Act, the federal government has limited the liability to reactor operators from a major accident to only \$10 billion.

The cost of the high-level spent fuel repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada has risen to \$96 billion. Originally scheduled to open in 1998, the repository is now set to open in 2017. It may never open due to site wetness issues that eventually will compromise waste storage methods.

In recommending West Valley as a storage site, Rising clearly doesn't understand this issue of wetness insofar as maintaining environmental isolation of nuclear waste is concerned. West Valley's location and climate make it uniquely unsuitable for the long-term storage of nuclear wastes; the site drains into

Lake Erie, part of the largest freshwater basin on the planet.

These simple facts have prompted both the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes and the government's own stakeholder group at West Valley — the Citizens Task Force — to call for the removal of all radioactive wastes from the West Valley facility. Far from being an economic boon, this failed commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing facility has already been a drain on taxpayers to the tune of \$2 billion since 1980.

The cost of complete cleanup of the West Valley site, including the two nuclear waste dumps, was pegged at \$8 billion in the Energy Department's 1996 estimate. While this necessary cleanup may be a boon for local industry, as Rising points out, it will cost New York and federal taxpayers big time.

In summary, nuclear power already costs twice as much as electricity produced from the wind, not including the additional externalized costs and risks.

*James Rauch of Amherst is a member of the steering committee of the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes and the scientist and secretary for F. A. C. T. S. (For A Clean Tonawanda Site) Inc.*

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# The Buffalo News

**Radioactive waste is loaded into a rail car at West Valley Demonstration Project.**

Derek Gee/Buffalo News

11/02/08 06:34 AM

## Nature Watch

# It's time to reconsider the option of nuclear power

By Gerry Rising



An exchange for and against nuclear power was printed on Aug. 24 in The Buffalo News. Both writers, Mark Perry (pro) and Wayne Madsen (con), missed the most important points and thus failed to address the issues.

As a science writer, I am speaking out on this issue because most local and national nature organizations adopted strong positions against nuclear power many years ago. Those positions have become fixed — knee-jerk is the contemporary designation. The time has come for these groups to reconsider their stance. I am not alone in this posture. My opinion is also shared by Andrew Revkin, a science reporter for the New York Times.

I am not an expert on atomic energy, but I urge my colleagues to support a serious reconsideration of the many issues. It may well be that a fair review will lead these organizations to continue their opposition to nuclear power. I only ask that the issues be exposed and assessed.

Times are changing rapidly. It is not just fuel prices that have soared; more basic food prices are also spiraling upward. We're not talking about nominal increases. Doubling and tripling prices are not just punishing the poor but now have caught the attention of middle-class wage earners whose salary increments have in no way matched these rises.

What has nuclear power got to do with this? It is one alternative to power from fossil fuels. And fossil fuels include not just oil. Natural gas prices have also soared and coal represents serious unsolved pollution

**problems with dangerous gases entering our environment, problems that appear unlikely to be solved by, for example, carbon sequestration underground.**

**Nuclear power is not the only alternative to power from fossil fuels. Thank goodness this country is finally, after years of unwarranted delay, moving forward with the development of wind, solar and geothermal energy sources. And some remarkable possibilities remain just beyond our reach today. For example, conversion of solar power through the use of algae (as an alternative to corn) is a serious candidate. One Colorado entrepreneur-researcher in this field told me this past summer, “We have solved about 90 of the outstanding 100 problems.” Obviously the most difficult 10 remain, but German plants already use the process.**

**Another alternative to fossil fuels is conservation. We remain an undisciplined society, but the one positive result of these exorbitant gas prices has been that we appear finally to be sensitive to costs. Buses, subways and trains are experiencing a significant increase in ridership.**

**A group from MIT and Harvard chaired by chemist John Deutch and physicist Ernest Moniz studied the issues related to atomic energy in 2003 and issued a report titled “The Future of Nuclear Power.” They identify the four concerns that must be addressed as: “high relative costs; perceived adverse safety, environmental and health effects; potential security risks stemming from proliferation and unresolved challenges in long-term management of nuclear wastes.”**

**The group’s primary finding: “The nuclear option should be retained precisely because it is an important carbon- free source of power.”**

**One of the considerations in this and other recent reports is the possibility of recycling the fuel rods in so-called closed systems instead of simply disposing of them. Some proponents claim that this would largely solve our disposal problems by reducing these wastes to near zero.**

**Another is the increasing science supporting safe underground disposal of spent fuel. And here I will go out on a limb: I believe that the “success” of the opponents of West Valley was illusory. I join those convinced that those communities would be better off today with the fiscal benefits of having nuclear fuel safely stored there.**

**It is important to point out that the MIT-Harvard report is already five years old and that, in particular, with the major increase in fossil fuel costs, the economics has changed significantly over that period.**

**Nuclear power should be back on the table.**

**insrisg@buffalo.edu**

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## **Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program seeks former employees of WVDP**

By NATALIE CONDOR-SMITH  
Journal Correspondent

According to Joanne Janik, caseworker for the Energy Employees Compensation Resource Center, Department of Labor is looking for current employees, former employees, contractors and surviving family members of employees of 14 atomic weapons employers or department of energy employers in the Western New York Area, including the West Valley Demonstration Project.

“Our office’s main function is to talk to various groups and people in the community to educate them about the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program,” she told members of the West Valley Citizen Task Force at its monthly meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 22. Continuing, Janik said, “Our second function is to find all these people, and guide them through working out the claim forms, getting information regarding their employment and medical conditions. In many instances, we don’t have the employees, so we work with the spouses.”

In summary, Janik described the four levels of compensation that may be available:

1. \$150,000 lump sum federal compensation.
2. Medical benefits which will be covered for the rest of their lives.
3. Wage loss benefits upon approval under part E of the program.
4. Compensation for impairment upon approval under part E of the program.

Part E of the program provides for variable compensation of up to \$250,000 and medical benefits for employees of Department of Energy contractors and subcontractors who developed an illness as a result of occupational exposure to toxic substances. It also may provide a payment based on the level of impairment and/or wage loss incurred as a result of the covered illness. Finally, Part E provides benefits to qualified survivors of deceased employees.

For more information, Janik can be contacted at the Energy Employees Compensation Resource Center at 832-6200 or 1-800-941-3943.

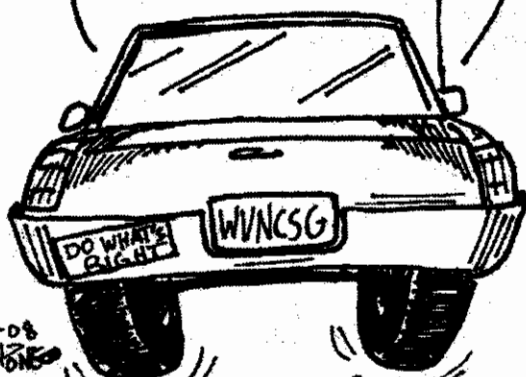
EDITORIAL

Springville Journal  
Thursday, October 30, 2008

**Out Of Control**

TELL ME AGAIN WHY  
WE'RE DRIVING  
ALL THE WAY OUT  
TO OHIO...

BECAUSE WE'RE  
GETTING NOWHERE  
HERE IN **NEW YORK!**



**CLEVELAND**  
**190** MILES

DEPARTMENT  
OF LABOR

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## Case worker suggests WV support group members lobby legislators

Joanna Janik, caseworker for the Buffalo office of the Energy Employees Compensation Resource Center, suggested the attendees of the West Valley Nuclear Compensation Support Group (WVNCSG) contact their legislators to vent their frustration and seek help in processing their claims for compensation and benefits as a result of illnesses from working at the West Valley Demonstration Project.

At its monthly meeting on Friday, Oct. 10, Janik said to the WVNCSG attendees, "Go to your local legislator or the Department of Labor in Cleveland." She said this in response to members' disappointment in not being able to enlist the help of Senator Chuck Schumer, whose office has been making vague promises to attend their meetings over the past few months, but no-one has ever shown up.

Janik attended the meeting in order to explain the process of making a claim, and to offer her support, especially to those members who have been waiting several years for a decision as to whether or not their claim has been approved or denied.

One such case involves a claimant who has been waiting for over six years. "I called NIOSH (the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) three years ago," he said. "They told me then that my claim was being processed and I still haven't heard back from them," he continued.

"What is effective is talking with your legislators and putting the heat on NIOSH," responded Janik. "There were 50,000 claims filed in 2001 and 2002 throughout the country from various facilities and only 200 people to work them, so they started bringing in subcontractors to help," she explained.

Another member said that he was denied within six months of making his claim. "I was a janitor there but I didn't have a dosimetry badge (a radiation detection device) for a whole year. I started in 1994 and from 1995 to 1997 West Valley had a spike in ionization in the stack and ionizing radiation is the #1 cause of thyroid cancer," he said.

If your claim is denied, there are opportunities for appeal, but you have to do this within 30 days of the denial," Janik said. With only five days left to file an appeal, the member was urged to write a letter to the Department of Labor asking for a hearing.

Lori Nason, a strong supporter of the group asked, "Why is it that the places where people work, like West Valley, you don't send out letters telling them that this compensation program exists?" Janik responded: "We will never see a list of employees from these facilities. If you have a list we would be more than happy to send a mailing out." Nason said that she and the other members will compile a list from memory although it probably won't include the names of subcontractors who worked at the West Valley Demonstration Project. Janik's mailing will be given to the group who in turn will enclose a flyer of their own. Mailing costs will be borne by Janik's office.

If you or a family member works or worked at West Valley Demonstration Project and have questions, you can send an email to [wvnscg@yahoo.com](mailto:wvnscg@yahoo.com). In addition, if you know of anyone who worked at the facility from the 1960s to 2002, the group asks that you encourage them to come to the meetings.

Additional help and information can be obtained from Joanna Janik's office of the Energy Employees Compensation Resource Center at 832-6200 or 1-800-941-3943. Email: [newyork.center@rroho.com](mailto:newyork.center@rroho.com).

The next meeting of the group will be at 6 pm on Monday, Nov. 17 at the Concord Town Hall.

By NATALIE CONDOR-SMITH  
Journal Correspondent