

January 30, 2007
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**SEVERAL COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE “VOLUNTEERED” TO PARTAKE IN
THE GLOBAL NUCLEAR ENERGY PARTNERSHIP (GNEP).
COMMUNITY GROUPS URGE CONGRESS TO INVESTIGATE AND STOP THE
GNEP SITING PROGRAM**

Twenty-two community groups state that, “DOE has shown that it does not comply with legal public processes, and it does not follow Congressional directives or even its own siting requirements,” in a letter sent to congressional leaders of the Appropriations and Energy Committees.

The 22 community groups are all located at or near one of 11 “volunteer” sites. Out of these 11 sites, two are in New Mexico: between Hobbs and Carlsbad, in Lea County, and the Triassic Park site east of Roswell. Additionally, Los Alamos National Laboratory is being considered as a possible site for research and development. In response, five groups from New Mexico signed on to the letter: Southwest Research and Information Center (SRIC), Nuclear Watch New Mexico (NWNM), Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping (CARD), Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety (CCNS) and the Embudo Valley Environmental Monitoring Group (EVEMG). The letter is available at: <http://www.sric.org>.

The 11 sites throughout the country were “volunteered” by either a private company or the Department of Energy (DOE) to host a facility that would reprocess spent nuclear fuel from nuclear power plants. Each location is targeted to receive a multi-million-dollar grant from the DOE to provide more detailed information about their site, which would be used in the PEIS that is scheduled for release later in 2007.

Limited information has been released by the DOE concerning the actual activities that would go on at one or more of the approved sites. In fact, most of the proposals submitted by the private corporate bidders and DOE – which were the basis for awarding the grants – are unavailable for public review due to the alleged protection of trade secrets.

The groups’ letter concludes, “We cannot imagine that such a closed, callous and arguably illegal process was what Congress had in mind when it appropriated \$20 million in the 2006 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill” for the siting grants.

In addition, the community groups consider the proposed technology and spent nuclear fuel reprocessing, under the GNEP program, to be costly and impractical. The program poses a grave threat to the human and environmental health of surrounding communities.

Sheri Kotowski, of the Embudo Valley Environmental Monitoring Group, said, “In the last six months, communities down wind and down stream from New Mexico DOE facilities have repeatedly voiced their opposition to expanding nuclear operations. We see GNEP as another

‘Expanded Operation.’ This only adds to the burden the nuclear industry has imposed on the residents of New Mexico and will increase the looming health and safety threat by adding yet another nuclear dump.”

Shrayas Jatkar of Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping stated, “GNEP is another thoughtless policy that promotes the increase of energy supplies rather than addressing energy efficiency and conservation. When will the DOE think about our future and advance a sustainable energy agenda that instructs us to conserve and use less energy while immediately providing clean, renewable energy without harm to people or the environment?!”

Joni Arends, of Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety, said, “ Reprocessing is a recycled technology which has already resulted in disaster. The evidence is sitting on the shores of the Columbia, the Snake and the Savannah Rivers as leaking tanks of liquid high level waste. We have a responsibility to clean up the mess that was made in the past and stop this project now.”

The DOE will hold four public scoping meetings on the GNEP proposal in New Mexico:

Hobbs: Monday February 26th, 2007, 6 p.m.-9:30 pm

Lea County Event Center, 5101 N. Lovington-Hobbs Hwy.

Carlsbad: Tuesday February 27th, 2007, 9a.m. -12:30 p.m.

Pecos Village River Conference Center, Carousel House, 711 Muscatel Ave.

Roswell: Tuesday, February 27th, 2007 6 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Best Western Sally Port Inn & Suites (Ballroom), 2000 N. Main St.

Los Alamos: Thursday, March 1st, 2007, 6 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Hilltop House Best Western, 400 Trinity Dr.

For more information contact:

SRIC: Don Hancock, (505) 262-1862, sricdon@earthlink.com

NWNM: Scott Kovac, (505) 989-7342, scott@nukewatch.org

CARD: Shrayas Jatkar, (505) 266-2663, admin@cardnm.org

EVEMG: Sheri Kotowski, (505) 579-4076, serit@cybermesa.com

CCNS: Joni Arends, (505) 986-1973, jarends@nuclearactive.org