

Scare Tactics

Just when I thought I was savvy about the political realities of the world we live in, a press release crossed my desk announcing that the state of Nevada has retained a public relations firm to “develop and execute a national public information campaign” aimed at “educating” the general populace of the United States on the dangers of spent-fuel transport through their communities. As Nevada Gov. Kenny Guinn blithely states, “Our mission during the course of this national outreach effort is to educate Americans on the harsh realities of transporting nuclear waste and give them the opportunity to challenge transportation of this dangerous material in order to protect future generations.”

In other words, if you can't fight fair, fight really dirty.

Nevada has been opposed to a national high-level waste/spent-fuel repository being located in the state since the U.S. Department of Energy chose the site for characterization. So the governor's efforts in opposition to the site are nothing new. Still, this campaign represents a new low, even for nuclear opponents. Evidently, scaring the U.S. population with lies, misrepresentations, and frightening scenarios will be the state's contribution to “protecting future generations.”

Actually, spent-fuel transport has been shown over several decades to be a benign and safe process. But that fact will certainly not be included in any of the state's “outreach efforts.”

In these troubling times, with terrorist threats and heightened security alerts, government entities should be working to ease public anxiety and concern, not to frighten the public even more. And especially about something that is clearly *not* a threat and *not* a danger. What Nevada is planning is plainly reprehensible.

Spent fuel stored in pools or on concrete pads is safe, but spent fuel

stored in deep underground tunnels is much safer. The same is true for the DOE's HLW from weapons cleanup activities. So if the state of Nevada *truly* wants to protect future generations, it will embrace the concept of one national, central HLW/spent-fuel repository, so that there will not be dozens of smaller spent-fuel and HLW storage sites dotting the country.

Kudos

As we have in past March/April issues, in this issue of *Radwaste Solutions* we are pleased to be able to reprint award-winning presentations from last year's Waste Management conference.

The best oral paper award went to R. E. J. Mitchel from Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. His paper, “Low-Dose Radiation Risk: A Biological Reality Check,” begins on page 30.

The honorable mention oral paper, “Transition to Private Ownership: Lessons Learned during the Grand Junction Office Site Transfer,” by Donna Bergman-Tabbert and Tracy B. Plessinger, begins on page 36.

In the best poster presentation category, the winner was “TRU Waste Management—Past, Present, and Future at Oak Ridge National Laboratory,” by K. M. Billingsley, K. P. Guey, J. R. Trabalka, and G. L. Riner. Honorable mention went to “Reducing Transportation and Shipping Costs by Utilizing Reusable Containers and Rail Conveyance,” by Kenneth M. Grumski, Margaret B. Loop, Ronald S. Cardiale, and Tom O'Malley. Because of their length, these poster presentations could not be published in this issue.

Our congratulations to all of the award-winning authors, and our thanks to the kind folks at WM Symposia for allowing *Radwaste Solutions* to reprint the winning papers as articles.—Nancy J. Zacha, Editor ■



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