
Monday March 15, 2010

13.30 hrs (WST)

Ms J Dennett
Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Dennett and Committee

I am making a concise submission to the Committee on the proposal to locate a nuclear waste dump near Tenant Creek, at Muckaty Station.

The proposal should be delayed for ample time to correct errors and omissions in the process particularly in providing information for public scrutiny which appears to be incomplete or missing and especially in regard to relative merits of other sites.

The Mucktady Station decision appears to have been taken without sufficient regard to:

1. Scientific examination of the environs

The proposed purpose of nuclear waste dump, on account of its extreme toxicity, poses a permanent strong threat to the health of the area and its people, wildlife and water supplies and needs exemplary examination. I understand that the published earthquake risk is 0.9 (*Synthesis Report* by Parsons Brinkerhoff). More time is needed.

2. Existing Australian laws, state and territory legislation and also commonwealth laws governing exactly what is at risk as mentioned above: people living there and the environmental sustainability of the area.

This makes it difficult for any Northern Territory Minister or MP doing their democratic duty by the electorate to exercise their legal powers in relation to the proposal. It is also a statement by the proposal against representative democratic process.

3. Evidence collected, much of which is missing at this crucial time.

As a person whose degree included a major in anthropology from the University of Western Australia, I am familiar with the history, at times very disrespectful, of remote living Aboriginal Australians. I understand that only last Friday it came out in public that the missing anthropological report which Minister Ferguson has not seen can't even be located! Prime Minister Rudd made a hugely healing apology in 2008 but this, if true, demonstrates that Minister Ferguson and his staff have no respect whatsoever and he shames us all on our behalf for being content to consider the waste dump in ignorance of the report.

Also newly revealed is evidence on the failings of the assessment of this and three other sites proposed, which include flooding. As I write, south west Queensland is experiencing once in a century flooding which is heading for western New South Wales and further south. Such massive natural events, like this and the flooding of Lake Eyre last year can happen and will happen and insufficient respect has been paid to planning for natural forces.

Other evidence missing should be found, made available for public scrutiny and comment before any final decision is taken. More time is needed.

4. Financial wisdom of a decision being taken at this time

The case for making this an urgent priority has not been made. There is no hurry as I see it, in fact it would be well to go very slowly since the recent Global Financial Crisis makes the necessary overseas investment horizons much shorter and less dependable with consequent risk to the Australian Government which will be expected to underwrite such a project.

5. The explosion of practical, economical and profitable energy alternatives

The immense and rapid developments in sustainable engineering recently reduces a lot of the demand for nuclear power commercial applications. Australian ingenuity and engineering is world famous, unfortunately unlike overseas OECD engineers who are strongly supported by

business and government.

I acknowledge that there are many other factors of the proposal, with importance to many people and I am limiting my submission to the above points.

Thank you for your attention to this submission.

Yours sincerely

Ms Ruth Greble