

to Julie Dennett, Committee Secretary

About a decade ago, xmas 1998-Jan 2002, there was a credible threat to dump nuclear waste in outback Western Australia. The company concerned was then called "Pangea", and the same people now run a company called "ARIUS". Both are Swiss companies funded by British and European nuclear power concerns.

Although there was all-party State legislation passed in 1999, Pangea said "too bad, it is a Federal matter, and you can't stop us with just State legislation".

Fortunately, there was close to unanimity opposing Pangea throughout WA (with the exception of some companies which would have been front-runners in the construction of the dump). As part of that opposition, I joined others in incorporating

"Scientists and Technologists Against Nuclear Dumping, (WA, Inc.)". Although the aims and objectives were reasonably focussed in stopping Pangea, it had one wider objective, stopping the intercontinental transfer of N-wastes.

The nuclear industry is always touting that waste isn't such a problem, and promises that technologies like Accelerator Based Transmutation will allow for

N-waste into energy and a reduction in the amount of the longer-lived components

of N-waste are around. However, there are costs in doing the research and building the facilities and at present uranium is so cheap that just once-through,

no-reprocessing, and dumping the waste is cheaper, especially if some other country will take the waste. In order to help "save the planet" as N-waste may well

be a substantially worse threat to humanity than a bit of CO2 from coal power stations

(i.e. climate change/global warming), it is vital, I think that the Federal Government

legislate to ban the imports into Australia of N-waste from any overseas N-power station,

indeed any N-waste from overseas except that originating in any re-processing of N-waste from Australian reactors, i.e. Lucas Heights.

A clear prohibition of N-waste imports will help push up the price of dumping N-wastes,

thereby improving the economics of producing less N-waste.

Every export contract for Australian Uranium should make it clear that Australia does not take foreign N-wastes.

The Howard Government once proposed the manufacture of fuel rods in Australia and leasing them, and joined GNEP associated with this. It is time, I think, for Australia to get out of GNEP, as the "leasing of fuel rods" was a little disguised way of getting money from taking foreign N-waste - presumably to be dumped on the parts of Australia least able to stop it, i.e. not a State, but the Northern Territory.

Personally, I think Australia should get out of GNEP.

If there is some reason for Australia being in GNEP, I feel we should only be there if we have strong Federal legislation saying that we won't be party to any "leasing of Australian-made fuel rods", won't make fuel rods until we have a local N-power facility (and I hope that is never) and won't take any N-waste from overseas (except that originating in any re-processing of N-waste from Australian reactors, i.e. Lucas Heights).

Personally, I favour each State looking after its own N-wastes (and WA does, but only has N-wastes from medical and other, industrial, e.g. X-ray imaging uses). This would then provide a discipline on each State to produce less N-waste.

Please use the occasion of the forthcoming legislation to legislate against N-waste imports.

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