

Jurjevic, Dijana (SEN)

From: Kathleen Winter [k-t@riseup.net]
Sent: Wednesday, 16 November 2005 1:53 PM
To: EET, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Nuclear Waste Dump legislation



The Chair - Senator Judith Troeth
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee Inquiry into Commonwealth
Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2005

I am writing regarding the legislation coming before Parliament on 22 November, which aims to quell community and indigenous opposition to the Nuclear Waste Dump proposed for the Northern Territory. I believe that this legislation is UNDEMOCRATIC and UNFAIR to the people of the Northern Territory, who have voted against the nuclear waste dump.

As much as politicians and mining companies may say, there is yet NO safe method of disposing of radioactive waste: at this point in time there are NO high-level waste dumps ANYWHERE in the world. Whilst the Government is proclaiming this to be a low and intermediate level waste dump, I think they have proven how untrustworthy they are - there is no assurance that we will not see high-level radioactive waste brought in from other countries.

Australia doesn't need a nuclear reactor at all. Without building the new reactor at Lucas Heights, we would not have to worry about the potential waste disposal issue. Stop creating more toxic waste, deal with what we already have. Focus our money and energy on sustainable energy sources: If Australia invested as much money into renewables as it does into mining energy research, we would easily build cost and energy-effective solar or wind generators. Stop thinking about the short term, think long term - think of your great-grandchildren's great-grandchildren, and what legacy you wish to leave for them.

Why opposing this legislation is vital to the health of our democracy:

- * the federal government has failed to make any compelling case for the urgency of this legislation.
- * there has been no consultation with the NT government or community, traditional Aboriginal landowners or those on the proposed transport routes.
- * the overriding of existing provisions of federal and territory law that could hinder or delay the dump plan is a disturbing precedent that greatly undermines community confidence in the Commonwealth's actions on this issue - and its future intentions.
- * the federal legislation would allow the proposed NT waste dump to be turned into an international radioactive waste dump housing highly radioactive materials from all around the world - effectively forever.
- * the federal government earlier gave an "absolute categorical assurance" to the NT that there would be no nuclear dump imposed. This legislation is in complete conflict with this earlier promise.
- * the Inquiry period is far too short to deal with the complexity of the issues involved and it is insulting that the committee has not bothered to travel to the NT to hear directly from the most affected community.
- * the claims about the need for the dump in order to maintain access to high quality nuclear medicine are wrong and are contradicted by senior medical professionals including the former head of medical research at the Lucas Heights nuclear facility - Professor Barry

Allen.

- * the sites chosen for the NT dump were not selected through any scientific assessment.
- * all political parties in the NT are opposed to the imposition of the dump.
- * the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) maintains that such facilities require community consent and a reasonable degree of 'social license'. This legislation is inconsistent with this international obligation.
- * this legislation has been criticised by the Senate Scrutiny of Bills Committee for its adverse impacts 'on personal rights and liberties'.
- * the legislation is heavy handed and anti-democratic. It removes the ability of local, territory and state governments to adequately reflect the concerns and aspirations of the communities they represent.
- * good public policy is developed through negotiation and inclusion - not imposed by governments determined to get their way no matter what.

I hope you will consider the future of all Australians when you debate this legislation, not just those who stand to gain financially.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Winter