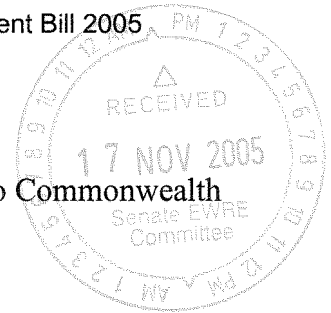


Jurjevic, Dijana (SEN)

From: Pat Finegan [wilbwiz@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, 17 November 2005 1:57 PM
To: EET, Committee (SEN)
Subject: submission re Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2005

The Chair
Senator Judith Troeth
Senate Employment, Workplace relations and Education Committee Enquiry into Commonwealth
Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2005



Dear Senator

I wish to make the following submission regarding the proposed placing of a Nuclear Waste Repository in the Northern Territory in spite of this being contrary to legislation introduced into that Territory prohibiting such a move.

In my opinion there are many items in the proposed legislation which are disturbing and if introduced will significantly change the current balance of power between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories by interfering in the rights of States and Territories to make decisions regarding the concerns of their citizens and to determine what is in their best interests.

I query why there is such a rush to make a decision in this matter, given that the major reason for such a dump is the disposal of waste from the Reactor still under construction in the outskirts of Sydney, and that really there is no satisfactory way of disposal of Nuclear Waste anyway (in spite of over 60 years of research).

The present situation, which retains any such waste in an above ground, secure, easily monitored situation, whilst certainly not ideal, at least provides some form of certainty as to the on going state of this dangerous material.

In the event of this waste being moved to a site far from supervision, there will be the possibility of the attitude of bureaucrats believing 'out of sight is out of mind', and thus allowing the danger to become less important in their mind.

The period given to make representation in respect of the legislation is much too short and certainly indicates that the Government is not particularly interested in seeking wide and far reaching information in an attempt to determine the best outcome for a very difficult decision. Incidentally I understand that all the political parties in the Northern

Territory are opposed to the imposition of a dump in the Northern Territory.

To have such blanket opposition must indicate that there is, in the words of Hamlet, 'something not right in the State of Denmark'. Following the decision by the High Court that there should not be a Waste

Dump in South Australia I certainly recall that prior to the election last year, the Federal Government gave an iron clad promise that there would not be a 'Repository' in the Northern Territory. Such a turn around by the Government on this matter surely undermines further the credibility of politicians in general and the Federal Government in particular. Politicians should not be allowed to undermine the basis upon which our system of government rests, namely honesty and integrity.

Of particular significance in the impending legislation is the possibility

that this Dump will attract the attention of the International Nuclear Industry and they will see it as a sign that Australia is indeed the 'Nirvana' of all Waste Dumps and proceed as though they have a God given right to create nuclear waste ad-in-finitum.

This situation will increase the danger of accident significantly, for greater amounts of this toxic poison will need to be transported around the world.

Two other issues I wish to raise are first that the waste dump is required because of medical necessity and secondly that across the world, the rights of indigenous peoples are once again being subjugated for the whim of the Nuclear Industry.

On the first issue there is ample evidence that a new reactor at Lucas heights is not required to produce nuclear isotopes for medical use. The Medical Association for Prevention of War has produced a paper which sets out very clearly that the construction of a Cyclotron would be able to provide enough nuclear isotopes both cheaper and safer than the current drive to build a very expensive, dangerous reactor on top of an ancient Seismic fault line. Professor Barry Allen, the former head of medical research at Lucas Heights has also indicated that a new reactor is not necessary to provide nuclear medicine. If there is no need for a new reactor, similarly there is no need for a nuclear waste dump. Secondly right across the world the indigenous peoples have suffered from the mindless expansion by the nuclear industry. In Australia Uranium mining has taken place on Indigenous land, often without consultation with the landowners and with very little compensation, certainly with very little consideration for the cultural beliefs of these people. Of course many are still suffering from the effects of the Atomic blasts on their land where they were not treated as being of any significance, and their land has been removed from them in perpetuity.

Already I understand that the Aboriginal people have indicated that they do not want a waste dump on their land in the Northern Territory. If there is to be such a waste dump then why not have it in Parliament House Canberra?

Finally the International Atomic Energy Agency has set out guidelines indicating that

Community consent is required before a facility such as the one proposed is constructed. It is obvious that these requirements have not been met. As you may perceive, I am definitely not in favour of a Nuclear Waste Dump in the Northern Territory and believe that this legislation should be opposed at all costs in the best interests of the Australian people and indeed of the people around the world.

Yours truly,

Pat Finegan