

Submission to the Senate Committee inquiry into the NT waste dump

To the Chair: Senator Judith Troeth

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee

Inquiry into Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2005

I am strongly opposed to the Howard Government attempting to force a low and intermediate level radioactive waste dump on the NT and introducing legislation into Federal parliament that would prevent the NT government or the community from doing anything to 'hinder or delay' the construction of a waste dump.

Students, families, Indigenous groups, environmentalists, academics, tourist operators, farmers, wider community, local government and landholders oppose this unnecessary and dangerous dump.

Our representative, Senator Scullion has stated that he will cross the floor and vote against this legislation when it comes back to the Senate for a final vote in December, however this is not guaranteed. Territorians do not feel that they are being justly represented in parliament.

I find that it is appalling and extremely arrogant that there has been no consultation with the NT government or community, traditional Aboriginal landowners or communities on the proposed transport routes. Furthermore I have a range of concerns with this legislation and the lack of community consultation. Please note some of my concerns listed below

- 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 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.
- 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 find it extremely problematic that 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.

Please consider the far-reaching detrimental effects of this legislation and the dangerous nuclear industry that it supports.

Yours sincerely

Pru Gell

Concerned Territory resident