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From: s4052072@student.uq.edu.au
Sent: Friday, 18 November 2005 12:39 PM
To: EET, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2005 - submission

November 18, 2005

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

Dear Senator Troeth

I would like to express my extreme concern at the government's proposal to alter legislation in order to create a radioactive waste dump in the Northern Territory. I object not only to the building of the waste dump itself, but to the processes that the government is using to push this proposal through.

Firstly I believe that a 2 week senate enquiry is simply not enough time for the complex issues involved to be effectively addressed. It is also disturbing to watch the federal government throwing its weight around by over-riding existing Territory provisions in order to ensure approval of the dump. This abuse of power can only weaken community confidence in the government and clearly undermines state and territory autonomy. All political parties in the Northern Territory are opposed to the dump. These parties represent local towns and communities, and in ignoring them the federal government shows only contempt for the people who will be most effected. This is confirmed by the absolute lack of consultation with local communities including traditional owners.

I do not support the introduction of the proposed legislation, but if the federal government wishes to make such a proposal comprehensive community consultation must be carried out. It is the government's responsibility to approach communities and it should have done so prior to the senate enquiry.

The government has failed to show any urgent necessity for a nuclear waste dump in Australia. Its claims that this is necessary for the continuation of access to high quality nuclear medicine are untrue and contradicted by leading scientists. In order to implement the proposed legislation, the government should be able to clearly show the need for such changes. It has not done so.

The lack of scientific input into the selection of the three proposed sites is also highly problematic. If the government will not base even such fundamental decisions on science, how can we expect sound and safe practises in the construction and operation of a nuclear waste dump. Before this legislation is passed, the government should provide clear scientific reasons that these sites have been prioritised.

Finally I object strongly to the fact that this proposed legislation contains no provisions to prevent a dump in the Northern Territory from becoming a site of international nuclear waste disposal. Australians need a firm guarantee that we will not become the dumping ground for the world's most toxic waste.

Sincerely

Danika Tager