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Sent: Saturday, 26 November 2005 6:42 PM
To: EET, Committee (SEN)
Subject: submission on radioactive waste management

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

Submission from Lesley Sammon

I am bringing to your attention my concerns about nuclear waste management

- 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.
- the transport of nuclear waste through the Blue Mountains is a very dangerous and the community here is widely opposed to it