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Public Comment by Fawn Shillinglaw on US NWTRB full board meeting transcript from Sept 23, 2009 in Maryland. To all board members:

I am so glad to see the board will remain directly involved in any waste plans for the future. It's too bad we of the public don't hear much about the legal status of the lawsuits with the utility contracts. It is clear from some of the comments in this transcript that now they feel that a lot of dry casks near water (at plant sites), and higher populations, is not safe. That isn't what anybody was told when the casks were put there and we objected. Now they want it off their land to a central storage site. An MRS didn't work when the negotiator was going all over the US, years ago, trying to site one then – and won't work now either. And with the budget cuts, and Yucca Mt. “on hold” (or whatever), nobody can really believe that NRC licensing process is as thorough as it would be with the “real thing” planned. Seems strange to me to proceed at all.

In spite of the rosy view of the vendors, there are a lot of problems with so called “recycling”, one of which is the uranium – where does it go? – Dr. Arnold wants to know. Separating all these wastes, solid and gas, and dealing with them, sounds very expensive, and certainly NRC has not done the rulemaking for all this yet. Any of these processes still necessitate a repository. From worldwide reports there is still a lot of opposition to any repositories. As several people noted, if you concentrate some of the separated wastes, they become more dangerous. And some of the heat and higher doses of the new spent fuel types create problems on the cask pads for heat loads and dose loads at the fences – as well as in any repository.

The economics of all these new mox fuels and reprocessing ideas apparently would require a levied fee. Is that really feasible? I doubt it. This country is in hard times – people don't want to pay more for any thing now.

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Rod Ewing seemed to me to be the most frank speaker. He says “there are no closed fuel cycles”. He says, that you have the mining of uranium which has a huge impact. Why don't I see discussion of those ramifications? He wonders about all the technological (pg. 167 line10) fixes the utilities and vendors predict as he says, “I think my main responsibility is to begin to plan for the failure of these grand schemes, and to plan for what will do with the orphaned waste streams”! He does not (line 16) get a “warm fuzzy feeling” about all the waste sitting at Hanford. Neither do I.

And it doesn't sound like WIPP will take the waste – where will all the low level and greater than C waste go? That's a real concern.

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He is right to command every body to look closely at the carbon cycle and climate change, and realize that we do not have a lot of time.

p.202 lines 16& 17

And then why would stakeholders invest or banks give loans to any of these projects – when they are all so volatile? One person said it’s a “catch 22” – every thing stalling, waiting for somebody else to bite the bullet – new plants depend on interim storage, depend on long term disposal in a repository, -- why build a new plant? Where is the economic case for it? We pay electric fees and taxes.

We need to be concerned about future generations like my four grandchildren. We used the power, we need to get rid of the waste safely and decommission the plants safely. To add to that burden by creating more risk and more waste with so called “recycling” is not a valid solution. It only creates more problems.

I really feel that wind power, conservation, solar, geothermal, bio fuel etc. can do the job much safer and economically less costs. If all the money that has been shoved down the nuclear drain, all these years, were poured into finding new energy solutions that help our climate crises, we’d be in a much safer situation worldwide today. I just find it hard to believe anybody would promote new nuclear plants at this time in our history.

I still say the devil is in the details of all of those schemes that require technological “fixes” to be developed sometime in the future. We have all lived with that answer way too long, and don’t believe it anymore at all. It’s time to look at the reality of the Yucca Mt. mess and set it aside. We need a better solution and it isn’t more waste creation.

Thanks for listening, Fawn Shillinglaw

(see next page please)

P.S. –

(Nov 3) – I kept waking up last night thinking about all this. Dr. Garrick’s question (to the fellow from the world group) as to how he thought our failure at Yucca Mt. affected other nations waste programs was in my mind. And the fact that the Swedish new political group now will allow new reactors. The Swedish people acted in good faith to site a repository on the basis that no more plants would be built. How angry some of those people must be. And the comments on disputes with neighboring countries on where repositories are sited. Plus France’s problem with low level waste and dumping Tritium in the sea water.

The public doesn’t believe anything they are told about nuclear waste anymore. It is clear how corporate greed in vendors and utilities, plus political changes, can just knock out all the science in a flash. When dry cask storage started here at Pt. Beach, many people fought hard against it. Now three it sits near Lake Michigan just as we predicted – all those promises about how it would be removed broken. So – the cask is still the main thing as I always thought it would be. The Board still needs to keep dry cask storage casks as a main concern. Keep up to date on maintenance at plants, on plant scheduling problems, pool problems, decommissioning problems. How are the current casks affecting the whole operation? Keep in tune. That will be the crux of the problem in the future. Those so called “generic” casks are multiplying like rabbits out there. The standardization and integration in whole system approach has never been done (as we kept requesting). There won’t be repositories; I don’t think. Concentrate on storage casks – look at the details. I always knew it would come to this.

Thank you

Fawn Shillinglaw