

Positives for Peace and Environmental Justice

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RECEIVED

February 1, 2000

FEB 01 2000

Presented to the Department of Energy Formal Public Hearing
Chicago, Illinois

We are here today to provide comment concerning the transportation of nuclear waste throughout the United States of America. In that capacity, I am capable of providing facts and figures, statistics and data that would support my anti-nuclear position. I choose however to leave those facts for others to present.

In my time allotted here today, I wish to discuss the mindset behind the energy department's blithe and blind loyalty to nuclear interests at the expense of pure scientific fact and how that mindset is stifling innovation, creativity and ingenuity within the department and our country.

1 [As government employees, your responsibility is to the people of this country, not to the
2 influence and domination of an inept, inefficient and coddled nuclear industry.] [Never was the citizenry of this country ever asked whether or not we wanted nuclear fuel as an energy source. Never were we honestly told of the health dangers and real expense and effort it would take to tame the most lethal substance in the universe, something we now capriciously treat like silly putty in the hands of children, all with your patent blessing.]

3 [Today, I challenge the Department of Energy, once and for all, to boldly create a truly economical, sustainable, and future-thinking energy policy for this country. I am more than willing to sit down at a table to discuss scenarios for nuclear waste transportation and storage, as long as they are linked to a systematic closure of all nuclear power plants in the country and a rapid phase-in of non-polluting renewable energy options complete with all incentives and tax breaks currently bestowed upon the nuclear industry.]

You call yourselves the Department of Energy, and yet you chose to eschew the most innovative and wonderfully clean technology the United States ever invented, solar technology, and allowed it to be appropriated by European countries and Japan, who now dominate the market. Instead, you continue to immerse your energies and our tax dollars into playing defense for an industry that has produced and still produces the most pervasive and virulent toxic substance on earth.]

4 [Experts such as Drs. Judith Johnsrud, Rosalie Bertell, and Peter Montague and Science for Democratic Action president Arjun Makhijani, as well as many others, have all written about the tenacious capability of radiation to depress our immune systems which causes cancers, genetic damage and leaves us more susceptible to other serious infections such as tuberculosis and other viruses and bacterial infections. I ask whether or not you Department of Energy employees here

today ever consider the fact that you are contributing to the destruction of your own children's immune functions, endocrine systems and reproductive abilities.

- 5 **When I speak to you, I am not speaking only for myself. I stand before you today as a person living with AIDS, and in that capacity I speak for the more than 700,000 other souls in this country so also afflicted. We expect to be joined by 40,000 more with every passing year. As a collective body, we are insulted by the cavalier manner in which you would allow our already depressed immune systems to become bombarded with additional radiation through your current planned transportation procedures as well as other industry-conciliatory measures such as radioactive recycling into common household products. All these actions are mis-directed, last-ditch efforts that should be redirected toward a more innovative energy policy in keeping with a progressive new millennium mindset that acknowledges our responsibility to act in a manner that protects our nation's and our species' posterity.**

Today, the HIV-positive population of this country officially joins forces with all environmental, spiritual, and social justice organizations in a concerted commitment toward promoting the concept that nuclear waste is not a family value, and nuclear waste is not pro-life.

Researcher Nicholas Lenssen said over eight years ago that "Even the Department of Energy states that 40-70% of our current energy needs could be met by renewables within the next 40 years." You have 32 years to go. Get busy.

Gary Karch
PPEJ Founder