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1 MS. GEARY: Even if the technology were certain that it existed for the safe disposal of radioactive waste and a safe site were available, the transporting of the waste over hundreds of miles would be a dangerous proposition, involving potential massive exposure to radioactivity. Nuclear power generation turned out to have been a technological solution to energy production that did not consider all of the human, biological and physiological contexts. Only the science of physics was properly respected. The dangers to human life and health associated with the generation of great quantities of waste were not adequately factored into the equation.

The dangers of radiation have been slow to dawn on both scientists and lay persons. For example, Marie Curie, the scientist who discovered radium, did not realize the extent of the danger to the human body, even her own. She died of cancer caused by her handling of this substance in her scientific explorations. Most Americans first learned of nuclear power when this country exploded a nuclear bomb over a nation with whom we were at war. Little did we realize that this same radioactive force would be brought home into our midst after the war in utilization of the atom for electric power generation.

Electric companies promised that solutions would be found for safe disposal of the large quantities of radioactive waste resulting from power generation. When no solutions appeared, many resorted to denial of the possibility of harmful effects. To date, no adequately safe solutions have been assured for the disposal of nuclear power plant waste. They continue to give off harmful radiation for thousands or millions of years while stored at the site of the power plant. They are contained according to the best-known solution available, although imperfect, not foolproof, with the hope that nothing will go wrong.

4 The current plans to move those radioactive wastes to an underground area in Nevada do not include a perfected technology for storage. In fact, storing 70,000 metric tons of high-level radioactive waste in a single location brings escalated risks to the new site, risks of greater volatility than the smaller amounts stored at various sites around the country. Those plans are based not on scientific advantage over the present system, but above all on the hope that nothing can go wrong, go wrong, go wrong.

2 In St. Louis we are at the crossroads of the truck and rail routes which will be utilized in the transport. The additional risk to all human life along these routes must be considered. We know from Three Mile Island and Chernobyl that accidents do happen, accidents of all kinds that could involve exposure to radioactivity, exposure which is particularly harmful to children and pregnant women and their unborn children. The population of St. Louis could be exposed, on the average, to a shipment every other day for 30 years.

What measures are being taken to prevent the dangers of increased exposure to the population of St. Louis? Who decides that the cancers or birth defects or miscarriages from this exposure are acceptable risks? The hope that nothing can go wrong, go wrong, go wrong, is not enough. We must speak up for the population of St. Louis, for the state of Missouri, as well as the populations in 43 states along the transport routes and those living near the proposed new storage site.

3 MS. GEARY: The waste generated from nuclear power plants should be left where they are. Solutions for their safe storage, if found, can be applied on site. Nothing will be gained by moving fuel rods with the estimated equivalent radioactivity of two million atom bombs to site. We call upon our congressmen and senators to stop this dangerous transport of radioactive waste on the railroads and highways across the heartland of America. The hope that nothing can go wrong is not a sufficient basis on which to risk our lives and our health.