Federal Dump Search Team Lampooned in Minneapolis

Continued from Cover

The nuclear industry wants this waste removed from its premises before more accidents happen. Since the DOE has yet to find a permanent disposal site, the utilities have successfully sued the DOE for missing the Nuclear Waste Policy Act deadline and forcing their continued onsite storage! This corporate welfare is one more way the government props up the industry. The industry's desire to get rid of the waste is what is driving the process for choosing a disposal site before there is sufficient thought given to a permanent geologic repository or a long term solution.

• **Involving pro-nuclear lobby at all levels**—While the nuclear industry is behind the push for moving waste reactor fuel out of the hands of the companies that produced it, the nuclear industry is also in front of this push! The pro-nuclear lobby group Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) was on the panel of speakers for the DOE meeting. Nukewatch recently exposed this group's leverage over the government when pro-nuclear industry legislation to eliminate pre-conditions on new reactor construction passed in Wisconsin (See Summer 2016 *Quarterly*).

• **DOE's growing credibility gap—**When an institution as trustworthy as the DOE is asking for "consent" about something, there is cause for suspicion. The violation of the Treaty of Ruby Valley in attempting to build the high-level radioactive waste dump at Yucca Mountain despite strong objections from the Western Shoshone First Nation, the pressure put on the Skull Valley Band of Goshute in Utah to house a high-level waste storage site, and the failure to meet cleanup requirements of the Tri-Party Agreement at the Hanford Reservation in Washington are only a few reasons for the great credibility gap the DOE has created for itself.

• **Ignoring previous public input**—The collection of another volume of public comments gives the impression that the authorities have not heard from the public. On the contrary, the DOE has mountains of expert and public opinion on the question of waste disposal from hundreds of individuals and groups, collected for decades, much of it shelved and ill-considered if not ignored. For example, over 200 safe energy organizations representing all 50 states have signed onto and urged implementation of Hardened On-Site Storage (HOSS) principles—developed by Dr. Arjun Makhajani of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research—for improving reactor-site waste storage facilities.

• **Leaving "Consent-based" undefined**—It is necessary to have an agreed-upon definition of "consent" for the DOE process to be consensual, but according to Dave Kraft of Nuclear Energy Information Service in Chicago, reports that DOE officials have said that consensus may mean different things at different times and at different places. Carol Overland of Legalectric in Red Wing, Minnesota spoke at the meeting about "affirmative consent" in the context of violent assault, replacing the word "sexual" with "nuclear." She said:

"Consent cannot be given when a person is incapacitated ... Incapacitation may be caused ... if monetary consideration is received and not publicly disclosed. Consent cannot be given when it is the result of any coercion, intimidation, force or threat of harm. When consent is withdrawn, or can no longer be given, nuclear activity must stop."

Also, when speaking of consent, we must ask from whom it is being sought. The DOE is not seeking consent from communities along waste transport routes; and it is impossible to obtain consent from the thousands of future generations that will be affected.

• **Ignoring the WCS application**—Of the eight consent-based siting public meetings held around the US, none were anywhere near the Waste Control Specialists (WCS) site in west Texas, the only place that has submitted an application to accept the waste. Nor was it acknowledged by the DOE that entertaining such applications from private companies completely bypasses DOE's own process of consent-based siting.

Radioactive Eggs and Ham

With DOE's dog and pony show set for stage, Nukewatch decided that an appropriate role would be to add our own circus act; "Radioactive Eggs and Ham," a parody of Dr. Seuss's 1960 children's book *Green Eggs and Ham*, riddled with radioactive references was written by me for Nukewatch specially for this meeting. The Q & A dialogue was read by two characters, the DOE and the

Potential Waste Host Community. The DOE was played by Nukewatch member Roger Cuthbertson and Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) Board Member Carol Walker. The Potential Waste Host Community was played by Nukewatch members Elena Hight, Austin Sims and me.

When it came time for John Kotek, the DOE's Acting Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy, to speak, Roger, portraying the DOE, stole the stage proclaiming:

"I am the DOE. The DOE am I."

One of the representatives from the DOE stood up to try to quiet Roger, but then from the other side of the room the Potential Waste Host Community responded: "That DOE. That DOE. / I don't like nuclear energy."

The DOE representative flailed his arms, discouraged, and sat down.

Roger, portraying the DOE character, continued, "Do you like radioactive waste?"

The Potential Waste Host Community answered, "I do not like radioactive waste."

Mr. Kotek was still trying to speak and follow the prepared agenda, but even with the microphone he did not drown out the parody.

Roger's DOE character insisted, "Would you like it here or there?"

The Potential Waste Host Community answered, "I would not like it here or there. / I would not like it anywhere. / Stop making radioactive waste. / I do not like it anyplace."

Several people tried to prevent the disruption and one even said, "Is there anybody here who has the authority to remove these people?"

No one did. Eventually the Acting Assistant Secretary backed away and surrendered the microphone as we took over the meeting for another three minutes.

After hearing several suggested waste sites made by the DOE character in the skit, the Potential Waste Host Community countered, "I could not, would not, in a borehole. / It is not safe, or under control. / I will not take it on a train. / You should not drive it through the rain. / Not on a truck! Not next to me! / Not through my yard! You let me be! / I do not like it in Arizona. / I do not like it in Minnesota. / I will not take it in Massachusetts. / I will not take it to Yucca Mountain. / I do not like it here or there. / I do not like it *anywhere*! / Stop making radioactive waste! / I do not like it anyplace."

Finally the DOE character asked, "You do not like it, so you say. / What shall we do to save the day?"

The Potential Waste Host Community concluded, "Stop making radioactive waste! / Don't transport it all over the place. / Keep it on site / and save the human race!"

The tone for the remainder of the meeting had been set. Ridiculous claims made by the DOE were met with booing from the audience. During the Q & A period, 11 of 13 questions were critical of the DOE. When it came time for public comment, the denunciations were even more scathing thanks to a well-prepared, well-informed group of speakers that has been working against nukes for decades.

The federal process of seeking waste disposal sites is driven by the nuclear industry whose legal and financial liability will be lifted when its wastes are transferred to federal agencies. The DOE also needs to appear responsive to concerned citizens and has learned this lesson the hard way after facing opposition to the Yucca Mountain site and to earlier waste dump proposals. Now it feels it is necessary to build the image that it is seeking public input at an early stage in the process, and to use benign-sounding terms like "consent." These moves mean that control of the country's nuclear future has shifted slightly in the right direction. We will need to maintain public pressure to make sure that nuclear power becomes our nuclear past.

See the entire 57-page Public Meeting transcript including Nukewatch's disruptive parody (pp. 7-9) and Carol Overland's comments (p. 49) and read all of "Radioactive Eggs and Ham" to use in your community at www.nukewatchinfo.org.

Nuclear Heartland Book Tour: "Dangerous, Useless, Expensive: Why Eliminate Land-Based Missiles?"

Senior Nukewatch staffer and *Quarterly* editor John LaForge will be on the road this fall speaking about our new book, *Nuclear Heartland, Revised.*

Thursday Sept. 22 - **N. MANKATO, Minn.**
N. Mankato Taylor Library, 6:30 p.m.
1001 Belgrade Ave., North Mankato
(507) 345-5120

Sept. t.b.a - **PHILIP, So. Dak**
Minuteman Missile National Historic Site
24545 Cottonwood Rd., Philip
(605) 433-5552

Saturday Oct. 1 - **DENVER, Colo.**
Minuteman Missile silo M-8
bill.sulzman@gmail.com

Sunday Oct. 2 - **COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.**
Colorado College, 7 p.m.
Kresge Lecture Hall, Tutt Science Center
14 E Cache La Poudre St., Colo. Spgs.
(719) 389-6000

Monday Oct. 3 - **ALBUQUERQUE, NM**
Los Alamos Study Group, 6:30 p.m.
2901 Summit Place NE, Albuquerque
(505) 265-1200

Tuesday Oct. 4 - **TUCSON, Ariz.**
Himmel Library Meeting Room, 6:15 p.m.
1035 N. Treat Ave., Tucson
(520) 323-8697

Saturday Oct. 8 - **LAS VEGAS, Nev.**
National Catholic Worker Gathering, 9:45 a.m.
Las Vegas
(702) 647-0728

Monday Oct. 10 - **FRESNO, Calif.**
Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 6:30 p.m.
1584 N. Van Ness, Fresno (559) 237-3223

Tuesday Oct. 11 - **SANTA BARBARA, Calif.**
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, 12 noon
1622 Anacapa St. (near Valerio)
Santa Barbara (805) 965-3443

Thursday Oct. 13 - **BERKELEY, Calif.**
Berkeley Unitarian Universalists, 7 p.m.
1606 Bonita Ave., Berkeley (510) 841-4824

Tuesday Oct. 18 - **PORTLAND, Oregon**
Portland State University, 7 p.m.
(503) 252-2220

Call to confirm times:
Friday Oct. 21 - **POULSBO, Wash.**
Ground Zero Center for NV Action
16159 Clear Creek Rd., Poulsbo (360) 265-1589

Saturday Oct. 22 - **SEATTLE, Wash.**
Common Good Café
Univ. Temple United Methodist Church
1415 NE 43rd St., Seattle (206) 632-5163

NUKEWATCH QUARTERLY

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