

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF UTAH

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID M. JONES
MINORITY LEADER
25TH DISTRICT

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84102
582-8247



STANDING COMMITTEES: PUBLIC UTILITIES AND
APPROPRIATIONS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND

April 3, 1997

Radiation Control Board
Department of Environmental Quality
168 N 1950 W
PO Box 144850
Salt Lake City UT 84114-4850

Members of the Radiation Control Board:

We are submitting our comments and concerns regarding Item VII of your April 4, 1997 agenda, which addresses the Goshute Skull Valley Tribe Spent Fuel Storage Facility Proposal. We oppose this proposed siting of nuclear waste for the following reasons:

The proposal is for "temporary" storage. However, there is no expectation of a permanent storage facility in the reasonable future. As a result, this proposal would in practical terms be permanent, with no motivation for the private entities depositing the waste to ever move it again.

The proximity of this site to Utah's population centers should, by itself, eliminate the Skull Valley site from consideration.

The geology of the Skull Valley raises significant questions regarding the safety of both people and the environment in storing the highly dangerous nuclear waste at that location. Both the hydrology and active seismic nature of the area would indicate locating the facility there could result in catastrophic and irrevocable consequences.

Transporting the nuclear waste to the proposed site would pose significant risks to the residents of Utah. Addressing these risks would require careful planning and the creation of a costly transportation program, including public safety personnel and emergency response plans. The responsibility for implementing and paying for these essential safety measures should in no measure fall upon this state.

The storage facility is proposed by members of private utility industries, in order to dump within the borders of our state spent nuclear fuel rods generated by their facilities in the

East. These utilities will continue to generate profits and nuclear waste, and our state will be the repository for this extremely dangerous waste without cause to believe it will ever be moved again to a safe and permanent disposal site.

If the industry group currently attempting to place its nuclear waste at Skull Valley is successful, it is only reasonable to expect other industry groups to also arrange to place their nuclear waste at this location, thus increasing the dangers enumerated in this letter.

Utah is already the long term site for a number of major federal hazardous waste facilities. Siting of additional hazardous waste facilities, such as nuclear waste sites, should begin in the areas where these industries are generating the waste, thereby minimizing the risks of transportation and creating incentives for industry to manage its nuclear waste for the long term.

We recognize that the Skull Valley Goshute Tribe has a legitimate interest in the financial benefits of the proposed facility. There is no doubt the tribe is in need of assistance with economic development, and indeed the issue of the storage facility has brought this situation to the attention of a broader audience. However, we must respectfully suggest that the long-term environmental risks the facility would impose upon both the Skull Valley and the state at large more than outweigh the financial incentives the utility industry is offering to the tribe.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We look forward to working members of the board to address this issue and answer any questions the members may have.

Sincerely,

Representative Dave Jones

Representative Steve Barth

Representative Gene Davis

Representative Judy Ann
Buffmire

Representative Ralph Becker

Representative Patrice Arent