



# WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

**WCS and AFCI companies seek to bring HIGH-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE from the nation's nuclear reactors to TEXAS; ELEA seeks a site in New Mexico**



High-level radioactive waste is the most dangerous of all radioactive materials. Contamination resulting from the Fukushima meltdown disaster came from this same source - irradiated fuel from nuclear reactors.

High-level radioactive waste includes irradiated (used) fuel rods from nuclear reactors that contain uranium and plutonium. Radiation exposure can cause genetic damage, leading to birth defects, and cause many kinds of cancers, radiation sickness and even death. An unshielded person exposed to spent fuel rods would be immediately incapacitated and die within a week, according to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Nevada fought against burial of high-level radioactive waste at the Yucca Mountain site for decades, and other states have also resisted. Deaf Smith County in the Texas Panhandle was considered as a potential permanent repository site before Yucca Mountain was selected, but ranchers and farmers fought hard due to concerns about radioactive water contamination. Several Texas counties have said no to high-level radioactive waste proposals. Many Texans DO NOT CONSENT to storing the nation's deadly nuclear waste.

## **What Should Be Done With High-Level Radioactive Waste?**

**Centralized (Consolidated) Storage is NOT needed.** The least risky option is to store fuel removed from nuclear reactor fuel pools in dry casks, securing the waste at the generation site or nearby. Most reactor sites are now licensed to store waste for 60 years past decommissioning, and these sites will remain guarded for decades anyway.

Shipping radioactive waste by rail or trucks increases risks of terrorism and accidents, and the process would continue for over 20 years. Yucca Mountain efforts have failed and no permanent repository is available yet, so why ship this dangerous waste just to store it in a different location? The NRC should prevent terrorism and accident risks by halting consideration of consolidated radioactive waste storage.

## KEY FACTS

- Waste Control Specialists (WCS) has applied to “store” 40,000 tons of cancer-causing high-level radioactive waste near Andrews, Texas. If the NRC approves their license thousands of shipments of this deadly waste across Texas would occur for over 20 years. WCS will likely be asking the Texas legislature to support expansion of their current “low-level” radioactive waste license to accept this most dangerous waste from nuclear reactors around the country.
- Eddy Lea Energy Alliance (ELEA) seeks to build a high-level storage facility just across the border in Hobbs, NM, where they want to store 70,000 tons of the radioactive waste.

For more information visit [www.NoNuclearWasteAqui.org](http://www.NoNuclearWasteAqui.org) or [www.RanchersCoalition.org](http://www.RanchersCoalition.org)  
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Importing this waste would pose risks from accidents, leaks and terrorist actions.

- If Texas accepts the deadly waste for storage the site will likely become the nation’s de facto permanent disposal site. Utilities would no longer be lobbying for a final repository and thus Congress won’t fund one. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) raised this issue in their 2014 report on high-level radioactive waste.
- The April 2016 WCS application was rejected by the NRC as incomplete. The agency wrote 31 pages describing problems with the application. Among the NRC’s concerns were potential water contamination, inadequate monitoring and emergency planning, inadequate engineering studies, climate impacts on the waste from extreme desert heat and more.
- Transporting high-level radioactive waste increases terrorism risks, according to TCEQ. Cities like Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and El Paso could become targets for terrorists holding a trainload of waste hostage. We can predict transportation routes, but they wouldn’t be approved by USDOT and NRC until 2022, when licensing could be complete. Citizens and policymakers need to know the routes before any decision on whether to give or deny consent to radioactive waste storage is made.
- EnergySolutions has signed an agreement to purchase WCS, but there are anti-trust issues and concerns about EnergySolutions’ environmental record. The sale has not yet been approved by the Department of Justice.

- Licensing the site is premature and illegal. Under the federal Nuclear Waste Policy Act a permanent repository must be approved before any consolidated storage site can be licensed. Rep. Conaway is trying to negate this requirement with HR 3643.
- The DOE has not finalized rules for how a state or community gives or denies consent. It's premature for the legislature to act until the policy is finalized.

### **High-Level Radioactive Waste Data**

- High-level radioactive waste is so dangerous that it must remain isolated from living things for thousands of years. It is mainly irradiated (spent) fuel rods from nuclear reactors, which still contain most of their original uranium, as well as with radioactive strontium, cesium and plutonium, which are created during the reactor fission process. Some of these materials have long half-lives, and remain dangerous far into the future. For example, plutonium remains dangerous for over a quarter of a million years. Inhaling it will cause cancer.
- About 100,000 metric tons of irradiated fuel will have been generated by existing U.S. reactors by the time they cease operating, with roughly 1000 metric tons of plutonium. If separated, there would be enough plutonium for 120,000 nuclear bombs. If diluted uniformly, the strontium-90 in would be enough to contaminate the entire fresh water supply of the world to about 60 times the U.S. drinking water standard.
- TCEQ acknowledges the vulnerability of radioactive waste to sabotage during transport, and that "consequences due to sabotage or accidents are also higher during transport since the waste may be near population centers." Centralized (consolidated) Interim Storage of the nation's high-level waste at a single location would increase risks by creating an additional site that must be secured.
- DOE calculated that the 53,000 truck shipments originally anticipated to go to Yucca Mountain if transport was mainly by truck would likely have resulted in 53 accidents. Train accidents were anticipated at a rate of 1 in 10,000 shipments. At least one train accident was expected to occur if transport was mainly by train.
- A DOE report found that a severe accident involving one radioactive waste cask that released only a small amount of waste would contaminate a 42-square mile area, with cleanup costs exceeding \$620 million in a rural area. Clean up in an urban area would be time consuming. It could cost up to \$9.5 billion to raze and rebuild the most heavily contaminated square mile.
- Importing high-level radioactive waste might benefit a few corporations, but millions of Texans and people along transport routes throughout the country would bear the financial and health risks of accidents or sabotage.

## **How you can help:**

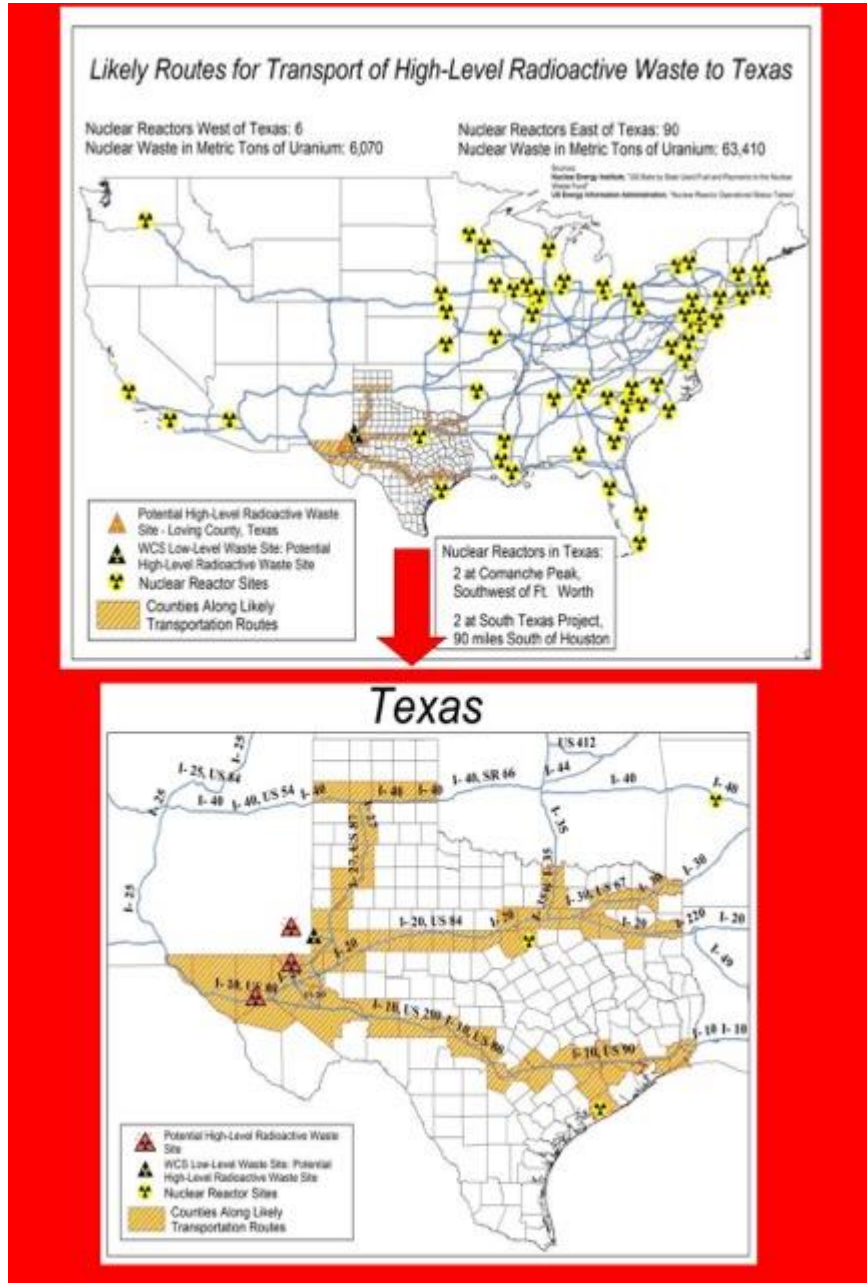
**Donate**

Your donations will help us protect Texas and New Mexico. Any donation will be gratefully accepted. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, so donations are tax exempt.

Please make checks out to **SEED Coalition** and mail them to:

**SEED Coalition**  
**605 Carismatic Lane**  
**Austin, TX 78748**

For any questions or inquiries or to donate stock please call: Karen Hadden 512-797-8481



**Contact your local officials and ask them to:**

- Halt efforts to dump high-level radioactive waste on Texas/New Mexico and its transport through our state.

- Insist that state and local studies be done to determine the impacts of an accident involving radioactive waste or terrorist attacks at the proposed waste dump site and along transportation routes.

## **Print out and circulate our petition for signatures**

([http://nonuclearwasteaqui.org/downloads/Halt\\_Radioactive\\_Waste\\_Petition.pdf](http://nonuclearwasteaqui.org/downloads/Halt_Radioactive_Waste_Petition.pdf))

Return completed petitions to:  
**SEED Coalition**  
**605 Carismatic Lane**  
**Austin, TX 78745**

## **Oppose HR 3643 in Congress**

Tell Rep. Conaway and cosponsors that you oppose the bill. Ask them to withdraw support and ask them to instead prevent high-level radioactive waste dumping and transport.

Cosponsors include: U.S. Representatives **Sam Johnson** (R-TX 3), **Randy Neugebauer** (R-TX 19), **Blake Farenthold** (R-TX 27), **Kay Granger** (R-TX 12), **Gene Green** (D-TX 29), **Kenny Marchant** (R-TX 24), **John Culberson** (R-TX 7), **Lamar Smith** (R-TX 21), **John Carter** (R-TX 31), **Roger Williams** (R-TX 25), **Pete Sessions** (R-TX 32), **Jeb Hensarling** (R-TX 5), **Filemon Vela** (D-TX 34), **Henry Cuellar** (D-TX 28)

Ask other Congressional Representatives to actively oppose the bill.

**Contact the media** Speak out about your concerns about high-level radioactive waste dumping in Texas/ New Mexico and its transport through our state.

For more information go to: [NoNuclearWasteAqui.org](http://NoNuclearWasteAqui.org)