

PRESS RELEASE & Telephone Briefing Tuesday 8/16 @ 11am EDT

BEYOND NUCLEAR
CANADIAN COALITION FOR NUCLEAR RESPONSIBILITY
CITIZENS FOR ALTERNATIVES TO CHEMICAL CONTAMINATION
ENVIRONMENTALISTS, INC – LONE TREE COUNCIL
NUCLEAR INFORMATION AND RESOURCE SERVICE
SAVANNAH RIVER SITE WATCH – SIERRA CLUB

Groups File for Injunction to KEEP LIQUID RADIOACTIVE WASTE OFF OUR HIGHWAYS

For Immediate Release: August 15, 2016

One hundred fifty truckloads of inherently dangerous liquid radioactive waste are slated to drive through Canadian and US communities and across major waterway crossings, from Chalk River, Ontario, Canada to the Savannah River Site, South Carolina, USA.

Seven nonprofit organizations are challenging these unprecedented, high-risk shipments in federal court in Washington, DC, requesting preliminary and permanent injunctions to prevent the import and transport which violates US federal environmental, atomic energy and administrative procedure laws.

These shipments could begin at any time.

Court and relevant background documents are linked here:

<http://www.beyondnuclear.org/waste-transportation/>

Press Phone Briefing by Media Contacts Tuesday, August 16, 2016, 11:00 am till Noon, EDT.
Media are invited to call in at 605-562-3140, passcode: 723281#

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Kevin Kamps, Radioactive Waste Watchdog, Beyond Nuclear, (240) 462 3216, kevin@beyondnuclear.org

Diane D'Arrigo, Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS), (202) 841 8588, dianed@nirs.org

Gordon Edwards, Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility (CCNR), (514) 489 5118, ccnr@web.ca

Tom Clements, Savannah River Site Watch, (803)240-7268, srswatch@gmail.com

The coalition lawsuit charges that the Department of Energy (DOE) and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) failed to provide a thorough public process as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to fully analyze the hazards of transporting *liquid* highly radioactive waste. An Environmental Impact Statement must be prepared and made available for other federal agencies and citizens to review and comment on, including a discussion of alternative ways to deal with the nuclear waste.

Experts from the international coalition testify that the shipments are unwarranted, ill-advised and entirely unnecessary. Allowing highly radioactive liquid wastes from Canada to be shipped through communities and over major waterways in Canada and the United States, to be dumped in South Carolina, without the deliberative NEPA procedures, will set a dangerous precedent for

decades to come. It will also intensify the pressures on the State of South Carolina to become an international nuclear sacrifice area.

U.S. Rep. Brian Higgins (NY – 26) has stated that the proposed shipments raise significant homeland security questions. The US House of Representatives unanimously passed Higgins sponsored legislation requiring a NEPA Environmental Impact Statement for the proposal.

Lynda Schneekloth, a Buffalo, NY Sierra Club member says: “It is irresponsible to ship *liquid* highly radioactive waste through our communities and over our waterways without truly studying the dangers and alternatives. Governments are responsible for the health and wellbeing of the citizens who elected them.”

The liquid high-level nuclear waste in question is a corrosive acidic mixture of dozens of highly dangerous radioactive materials including cesium-137, strontium-90, iodine-129, plutonium-239, and weapons-grade uranium-235, left over from the production of medical isotopes at Chalk River, Ontario, north-west of Ottawa.

Although it was previously determined that this highly dangerous liquid waste would be solidified and stored onsite in Canada, the US Department of Energy now plans to truck the 6,000 gallons of extremely radioactive waste, in liquid form, to the Savannah River Site in South Carolina, in exchange for \$60 million from Canada.

“Liquid high-level nuclear waste is known to be among the most dangerous materials on the planet, as we have seen at the Savannah River Nuclear Weapons Site and the nuclear power and weapons reprocessing site at West Valley, NY. There is a good reason why no one has ever tried to move this stuff over public roads before. The material from Chalk River is in the same category,” said Diane D’Arrigo of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service.

“Our organization has fought against the needless and heedless transport of solid irradiated uranium fuel over public roads, rails, and waters,” said Kevin Kamps, nuclear waste specialist at Beyond Nuclear. “The only thing worse than solid irradiated uranium is the liquid variety. It is a Mobile Chernobyl; it cannot be contained when spilled due to crash, fire, or deliberate attack.”

“Shipping highly radioactive liquid waste to South Carolina is wildly inappropriate,” said Dr. Gordon Edwards, president of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility. “Chalk River has been solidifying exactly the same kind of liquid waste for over ten years already. In 2011 Chalk River promised to handle all this material on site.” He added, “It was recently learned that Indonesia is going to be down-blending its high-level liquid waste on site, rather than sending it to the Savannah River Site, and Canada can do the same thing, making the high-risk transport of this material over public roads completely unnecessary.”

The lawsuit is being filed against the Department of Energy and National Nuclear Security Administration on behalf of a number of organizations whose individual members live along the potential transport routes who could suffer significantly in the event of a safety or security mishap allowing the escape of some of the highly dangerous liquid contents. The suit will also highlight specific problems at the SRS site that argue against the dumping of more nuclear waste there.

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