

March _____, 2017

Dear Senator _____,

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding your vote, on March 2nd, in favor of the confirmation of former Texas governor Rick Perry as Energy Secretary. Perry has a blatant conflict of interest regarding the Waste Control Specialists, LLC (WCS) radioactive waste dump in West Texas. WCS's owner, Harold Simmons, infamously nicknamed the "King of Superfund Sites," was a major Perry campaign contributor, to the tune of \$1.25 million. (Although Simmons died in late 2013, his family still owns WCS.) Perry and his appointees, in return, provided WCS every expansion permit it requested. Perry even travelled to West Texas, promoting WCS's biggest expansion yet – to become a centralized interim storage site for commercial irradiated nuclear fuel.

Perry did all this, despite very serious environmental justice concerns at the WCS site. The surrounding communities in West Texas, and immediately adjacent Southeast New Mexico, include a large percentage of Latin American residents, and a significant proportion of low-income residents. These communities are already heavily burdened with pollution from fossil fuel (oil extraction and fracked natural gas), nuclear (uranium enrichment), and other hazardous industries.

WCS also puts at risk the Ogallala Aquifer. Stretching from Texas to South Dakota, it is North America's largest, providing vital drinking and irrigation water to millions, across eight states on the High Plains.

Now, as Energy Secretary, Perry would sign the contract obligating federal taxpayers to pay WCS billions of dollars to construct and operate a *de facto* permanent parking lot dump for commercial irradiated nuclear fuel and highly radioactive waste.

The WCS "centralized interim storage facility" would also immediately transfer unlimited liability for the wastes, from the companies that generated it (and hugely profited thereby), onto the backs of federal taxpayers, without any linkage to an operating permanent geologic repository. This linkage has been a wise requirement under federal law (the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, as Amended) for decades. The linkage has been a safeguard against a supposedly temporary storage site being abandoned in place, as *de facto* permanent disposal, albeit one most dangerously located at the surface, at a site never determined to be suitable for such a high-risk gamble.

The WCS scheme would also inevitably launch high-risk "Mobile Chernobyl" truck and/or train shipments through most states nationwide, and could even launch "Floating Fukushima" barge shipments on surface waters (lakes, rivers, and seacoasts).

For these reasons, I re-emphasize my deep concern with your vote to confirm Perry as Energy Secretary. I urge you to seek ways to address now-Energy Secretary Perry's blatant conflict of interest re: WCS, and the risks it creates for taxpayer pocketbooks, as well as the health, safety, and environment of millions of Americans.

Sincerely,

Your name

Your address

Your street

Your city, state Your zip code

Your phone #