

Alliance For Environmental Strategies – March 1, 2018

Press Release

All the Nation's High Level Nuclear Waste Coming to New Mexico? Together We Can Protect Our Lands and Way of Life

Dangerous and potentially deadly radioactive waste may be headed for Southeastern New Mexico unless people take action to stop it. Holtec, a private corporation, has applied to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for a license for "Consolidated Interim Storage" of up to 100,000 metric tons of "spent" nuclear reactor fuel, for in-ground storage in Lea County, New Mexico. This, the nation's most dangerous nuclear waste would be transported by rail first to this site then transported again when "a scientifically viable permanent disposal site becomes available."

Rail transport risks the health, safety and way of life of New Mexicans in all communities through which rail lines run. Any accident, leak, or terrorist activity during the projected 10,000 shipments to the site via rail for over 20 or years, could impact tourism across the state and agriculture (\$270 million in Lea county, \$149 million in Eddy County), property values, the oil and gas industry and other economic activities.

Clean up of contamination after an accident that released radioactivity is estimated at \$620 million in rural areas and \$9.5 billion in an urban area, according to a Department of Energy study.

"The plan proposed by Holtec would dump the entire nation's high-level radioactive waste in New Mexico, creating huge risks and a massive burden for the people of our state," said Rose Gardner, of Eunice, New Mexico. "This is clearly an environmental injustice as New Mexico is a predominately Hispanic, Native American, people of color state."

"This is supposed to be a site for temporary storage for 120 years, but it may become the final resting place for this waste. The Federal government has failed to permit a repository for over the last 35 years and if they don't have a repository, New Mexico could get stuck with the waste and could have to clean up the site which could be financially devastating to New Mexico taxpayers," said Noel Marquez of Lake Arthur, New Mexico.

"Holtec's plan would require changes in federal law, since it depends on transportation and storage to be paid by taxpayers, which is not presently allowed," said Don Hancock of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Citizens are encouraged to attend upcoming NRC public meetings later in the spring and send letters to Congressional Representatives and candidates running for election.

For more information go to nonuclearwaste.org

For more information or to schedule an interview, contact:

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