

GNEP: Gargantuan Nuclear Expansion Program

No Global Nuclear Energy Partnership!

Nuclear reactors producing electricity create tons of waste—irradiated nuclear fuel which contains plutonium and other highly radioactive elements. These waste products continue to be radioactive and heat-producing for centuries.

The US Department of Energy's plan, called the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership or GNEP, calls for building special nuclear reactors to use the plutonium for fuel. The plutonium would be separated from the other waste products, a complicated process called reprocessing. Today, backers of the program try to sell it as recycling but it is reprocessing, a technology abandoned by the US decades ago. Bobbie Paul, executive director of the Women's Actions for New Directions chapter in Atlanta, rightly renamed GNEP the "Gargantuan Nuclear Expansion Program." Here's why:

Reprocessing is Expensive, Dirty and Dangerous

- Reprocessing is a "solution" that makes the waste problem worse, expanding the volume without reducing the radioactivity.
- During reprocessing, irradiated fuel waste products are dissolved in acid baths, changing it from a solid ceramic form to a caustic liquid.
- Today, reprocessing in France, Great Britain, Russia and Japan dumps radioactive pollution into the English Channel, the Irish Sea, the Techa River and the Pacific Ocean. The human health impacts are devastating.
- Reprocessing only re-uses 1% of the waste: the plutonium. The remaining 99% of the waste is still radioactive and must be disposed.

GNEP is a threat to our health and to our communities

- Plutonium-fueled reactors have failed many times. The technology is fatally flawed.
- The USA would sell nuclear reactors world-wide and supply them with nuclear fuel, spreading nuclear materials and nuclear technology over the globe.
- Nuclear waste would be returned to a reprocessing plant and dumpsites in the USA.
- It would begin the largest nuclear waste shipping campaign on the planet. US ports, railways and highways would see thousands of shipments of radioactive materials.
- The GNEP program would cost billions. Despite some new jobs created for a few, it is a losing economic proposition overall.

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

We oppose GNEP and reprocessing because:

- It would raise the risk of nuclear terrorism
- It will not solve our country's nuclear waste problem
- It would waste billions of dollars

The United States has over 50,000 tons of used nuclear fuel—high level waste. If we were to reprocess it we would produce about 500 tons of separated plutonium, enough for tens of thousands of nuclear weapons. Reprocessing irradiate nuclear fuel would create more radioactive waste. Nuclear fuel reprocessing was tried and abandoned by the federal government more than 20 years ago. The US Department of Energy estimated that it would cost taxpayers \$280 billion to reprocess all U.S. spent fuel and use plutonium fuel in commercial nuclear reactors.

MOBILIZE AGAINST GNEP

SPEAK OUT AGAINST EXPANSION OF NUCLEAR POWER and REPROCESSING

Attend one of the public hearings:

Tuesday, December 2, 7 p.m., New Hope Center, 602 Scarboro Road, Corner of New Hope and Scarboro Roads, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830

Thursday, December 4, 7 p.m., Aiken Technical College, Building 700--Amphitheater, 2276 Jefferson Davis Highway, Graniteville, South Carolina 29829.

Tuesday, December 9, 1 p.m., Holiday Inn Capitol, 550 C Street, SW., Washington, DC 20024.

For more information and critical analysis, go to:

Alliance for Nuclear Accountability: www.ananuclear.org

http://www.ananuclear.org/Portals/0/documents/ANA_GNEP_release_corrected.pdf

Union of Concerned Scientists: www.ucsusa.org

http://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear_power/nuclear_power_risk/nuclear_proliferation_and_terrorism/ucs-comments-on-the-scope-of.html

Nuclear Information and Resource Service: www.nirs.org

<http://www.nirs.org/radwaste/reprocessing/reprocesshome.htm>

Physicians for Social Responsibility: www.psr.org

<http://www.psr.org/site/DocServer/GNEPTalkingPoints.pdf?docID=4381>

The US Department of Energy has a programmatic environmental impact statement on GNEP. The draft PEIS is available on-line at:

http://www.gnep.energy.gov/pdfs/GNEP_PEIS.pdf

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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