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Protect Texas from Becoming Nation's Radioactive Waste Dump *State Representative Lon Burnam Asks Tough Questions of Compact Commission*

Austin, TX Today State Representative Lon Burnam (District 90, Ft. Worth) called on the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact Commission to answer tough questions regarding their proposed rule that would open Texas up to becoming the nation's radioactive waste dump. The Compact includes only the states of Texas and Vermont, but the draft import/export rule that is prime on today's agenda essentially invites with open arms radioactive waste from the rest of the country and possibly the world. The waste would go to a site in Andrews County in West Texas that is owned by Waste Control Specialists (WCS).

"Turning Texas into the nation's radioactive dumping ground so that WCS can make billions of dollars is irresponsible, especially since it will endanger public health and vital groundwater resources for thousands of years to come" said Representative Burnam. "Strong controls must be adopted now."

"The Compact was formed to manage low-level radioactive waste generated in the Compact states, Texas and Vermont, so why is the Commission developing rules to import waste from around the country?" asked Representative Burnam, as he began with ten hard-hitting questions regarding the draft rule.

Texas and Vermont, the only two Compact parties, have expressed a need to dispose of at least 6 million cubic feet of radioactive waste in the next 50 years. Yet this volume, estimated by the Texas Compact Commission, is nearly three times more than the capacity of the site.

"If the Commission develops a rule for import, isn't the Commission making the explicit assumption that the capacity of the site will be expanded and that the license will be amended for expansion? How can the Commission make such an assumption without a technical review of the site?" inquired Representative Burnam. He expressed concerns as to how the Commission can reconcile the discrepancy between Texas and Vermont's estimated disposal needs and the stated capacity of site.

The State of Texas becomes liable for radioactive waste as soon as it comes across the border into our state and nuclear energy expert Dr. Arjun Makhijani has stated that increased environmental impacts would result from importing radioactive waste from outside of the Compact. Leaks from the dump site could lead to health threatening radioactive contamination. With significant potential impacts the rule should be considered a 'major environmental rule' and Burnam inquired as to why the Commission has not deemed it so, and then asked, "Why does the Commission not discuss the liability implications for Texas resulting from the import rule?"

Representative Burnam and safe energy advocates are calling on the Compact Commission to exercise its power and authority to protect and promote the "health, safety and welfare" of Texans as the law requires. The Commission should not allow waste to be imported from outside Texas and Vermont and should prevent Texas becoming the nation's radioactive waste dumping ground.

The Compact meeting will be streamed live at: <http://www.house.state.tx.us/fx/av/live/extlivecmte24.ram> Representative Burnam's ten questions, SEED Coalition's Comments on the draft rule, and supporting expert analysis are available online at www.nukefreetexas.org. SEED Coalition's comments are endorsed by Public Citizen, Environment Texas, Nuclear Information and Resource Service, WE CAN, No Bonds for Billionaires and the South Texas Association for Responsible Energy.

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