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## Transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level nuclear waste

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Our society has made a commitment to creating hazardous nuclear waste, a commitment that itself should be questioned, but a commitment whose ramifications we must deal with for now.

5 I am a specialist in preventive medicine, the director of the preventive medicine residency program at Emory, and a national board member of Physicians for Social Responsibility. I believe that it is medically and socially irresponsible to discuss repeatedly transporting spent nuclear fuel through millions of Americans' backyards.

1 There are two major issues. [First, that of routine safety issues, and the ongoing exposure millions are guaranteed to have to low-level increased radiation. On an individual level, these exposures will mainly be trivial, but we cannot know what their cumulative effects will be. But I do know that my husband, 2 year old son and I live across the street from a major CSX line, and I do not want casks parked overnight in my  
2... backyard or in anyone's backyard.] [Second, there are concerns regarding non-routine safety issues, or our vulnerability to the, horribly, nearly inevitable non-routine, emergency safety issues that will arise because of accidents, or, perhaps even more frighteningly, because of deliberate acts of domestic or non-domestic terrorism.]

2 cont. First, the accidents. Again, my specialty is preventive medicine, and preventive medicine is about risk reduction. [The American Petroleum Institute says that for every million miles traveled, there are six heavy truck accidents. Such accidents can, of course, include fires and explosions, both from combustible materials carried by the trucks themselves, and from whatever unpredictable combination occurs in a collision.]

2 cont. Second, terrorism. In the past several years, Atlanta has been exposed to a siege mentality because of the explosions of bombs made from materials as inert as a nail. [Can you imagine what a tempting target a cargo of nuclear waste will be? And how devastatingly frightening to our populace? And this is not just a one-time, short-term threat. This is the decades-long threat of leukemia, of breast, thyroid, colon, and lung cancer, and of diseases about which we can only guess.]

3 Georgia has become an increasingly attractive place to visit and live. I do not know much about towns in the former Soviet Union or even about many towns in our own Northeast. [But I do know that Chernobyl and Three Mile Island have become synonymous with inadequate emergency planning for inevitable, potentially enormous nuclear problems, and that these have become places no one would want to even visit, much less live. We do not want the same connotations for Atlanta, or Chattanooga, or Chicago -- we cannot afford it from a health or from an economic perspective.]

4 The role of government in this is clear. To protect the people: to protect my patients, our colleagues, our friends and neighbors, and our families. [Human error and systems errors happen. If one transports thousands of shipments over cumulative millions of miles, risks that are only one-in-a-million become virtually guaranteed. We must make our government keep waste transportation and power companies from making profits at our considerable peril. The classic textbook *Public Health and Preventive Medicine* states that "radiation protection has developed from using basic principles of protection against external irradiation in occupational settings: shielding, distance, time, and training." We must take those basic principles, especially that of shielding, distance, and time to heart.] Government must protect the people -- it is the government's most fundamental responsibility.