

FEB 01 2000

MR. GARY KARCH: Thank you. We are here today to provide comment concerning the transportation and storage of nuclear waste throughout the United States of America. In that capacity I am capable of providing facts, figures, statistics and data that would support my position.

I choose, however, to leave those facts for others to present. In my time allotted here today, I wish to discuss the mind-set behind the energy department's blithe and blind loyalty to nuclear interests at the expense of pure scientific fact and how that mind-set is stifling innovation, creativity and ingenuity within the department and our country.

1 [As government employees, your responsibility is to the people of this country not to the influence
2 and domination of an inept, inefficient and coddled nuclear industry] [Never was the citizenry of
this country ever asked whether or not we wanted nuclear fuel as an energy source. Never were
we honestly told of the health dangers and real expense and effort it would take to tame the most
lethal substance in the universe, something we now capriciously treat like silly putty in the hands
of children, all with your patent blessing.]

3 [Today I challenge the Department of Energy, once and for all, to boldly create a truly economical
sustainable and future thinking energy policy for this country. I am more than willing to sit down
at a table to discuss scenarios for nuclear waste transportation and storage, as long as they are
linked to a systematic closure of all nuclear power plants in the country, and a rapid phase-in of
nonpolluting renewable energy options, complete with all incentives and tax breaks currently
bestowed upon the nuclear industry.]

You call yourselves the Department of Energy and yet you chose to eschew the most innovative and wonderfully clean technology the United States ever invented, solar technology, and allowed it to be appropriated by European countries and Japan, who now dominate the market.

Instead you continue to immerse your energies and our tax dollars into playing defense for an industry that has produced, and still produces, the most pervasive and virulent toxic substance on earth.]

4 [Experts such as Drs. Judith Johnsrud, Rosalie Bertell, and Peter Montague, and the Science for
Democratic Action president Arjun Makhijani, as well as many others, have all written about the
tenacious capability of radiation to depress our immune systems which causes cancers, genetic
damage, and leaves us more susceptible to other serious infections such as tuberculosis and other
viruses and bacterial infections. I ask whether or not you Department of Energy employees here
today ever consider the fact that you are contributing to the destruction of your own children's
immune functions, endocrine systems and reproductive abilities.]

5 [When I speak to you, I am not speaking only for myself. I stand before you today as a person
living with AIDS, and in that capacity I speak for the more than 700,000 other souls in this
country so also afflicted. We expect to be joined by 40,000 more with every passing year. As a
collective body, we are insulted by the cavalier manner in which you would allow our already
depressed immune systems to become bombarded with additional radiation through your current

5 cont'd. planned transportation procedures, as well as other industry-conciliatory measures, such as radioactive recycling into common household products.]

All of these actions are misdirected, last ditch efforts that should be redirected toward a more innovative energy policy in keeping with the progressive new millennium mind-set that acknowledges our responsibilities to act in a manner that protects our nation's and our species' posterity.

Today, the HIV positive population of this country officially joins forces with all environmental, spiritual, and social justice organizations in a concerted commitment toward promoting the concept that nuclear waste is not a family value. And nuclear waste is not pro-life.

Researcher Nicholas Lenssen said over eight years ago, quote, even the Department of Energy states that 40 to 70 percent of our current energy needs could be met by renewables within the next 40 years, end of quote. You have 32 years to go. Get busy.