Written by Gallupsun Staff
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Editor,

If Holtec International has its way, high-level radioactive waste (“spent fuel”) from Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant in New York and almost 100 other reactor sites in the U.S. would be transported on America’s highways and brought to southern New Mexico for “interim storage” although in my own view, this is a false narrative that is countered by the example of the Yucca Mountain repository and the site(s) will be permanent.

Permanent because the spent fuel will have to be moved again if another repository site is found. The Yucca Mountain project began in 1982 after the passage of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act that requires “the establishment of a deep geologic repository for nuclear waste storage and isolation.” In 1987 Congress designated Yucca Mountain as the only site to be considered.

The Western Shoshone nation has been in resistance of this action and has questioned the U.S. government’s decision based on the Treaty of Ruby Valley in 1863 and the violation of their Treaty rights. All treaties are legal contracts that emanate from International Law that establish a formal government-to-government relationship between tribes and the United States.

The Navajo Nation has the Treaty of 1868 and a Permanent Ban on the transportation of all things nuclear through the reservation. Five other cities in New Mexico (Albuquerque, Bernalillo, Las Cruces, Jal, and Lake Arthur) have passed resolutions in opposition to this transportation on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway and Interstate 40, which would pass through the City of Gallup, McKinley County, the State of New Mexico and the Southern border of the Navajo Nation.

On Tuesday, September 25, 2018, the Gallup City Council passed a Resolution No. 2018-27 that opposes the transportation of high-level radioactive waste through the City via I-40 and the BNSF Rail line. McKinley County also has a similar resolution. Resolution OCT-18-069 passed on October 02, 2018.

You are invited to join us at the 40th Commemoration of the July 16, 1979 North East Church Rock, New Mexico Uranium Tailings Spill that released over 1,000 tons of solid radioactive mill waste and more than 90 million gallons of acidic and radioactive liquids into the Rio Puerco. The contaminants flowed downstream the Rio Puerco through Gallup and across nine Navajo chapters and into Arizona.

To this day there has been no reclamation or U.S. governmental studies to see how far the contamination went and its impacts on local water systems and people's health and United Nuclear Corporation has not been held accountable for the spill.

On Saturday, July 13th, there will be a 7:00 am walk to the UNC spill site to offer healing prayers and testimonies by the community of Red Water Pond Road. Following the walk people will gather under the shaded Arbor for food, community education, speeches, and a silent auction.

The Nuclear Nation Film Festival will be held on July 14 at the El Morro Theater from 12 to 4:00 PM located at 201 West Coal Avenue in Gallup. Five films will be showing. A great educational afternoon is guaranteed. The event is FREE.

Mervyn Tilden
Gallup, New Mexico