Send in a public comment about Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) Due June 4th 2007

Send comments to: Mr. Timothy A. Frazier, GNEP PEIS Document Manager, Office of Nuclear Energy, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585-0119; Telephone: 866-645-7803, Fax: 866-645-7807, **e-mail to: GNEP-PEIS@nuclear.energy.gov.** Please mark envelopes, faxes, and e-mails: ``GNEP PEIS Comments.'' Additional information on GNEP may be found at http://www.gnep.energy.gov **Also call Smith, Wyden and your Rep to cut funding for GNEP and the Reliable Replacement Warhead (new nukes). Congressional switchboard in D.C. toll free # is 1-800-459-1887**

The Bush Adminstration's dangerous Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) program would expand global nuclear energy production by creating plutonium fuel to be used in a new generation of nuclear power plants through the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. Reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel – extracting the plutonium and uranium from used fuel – is the dirtiest operation of the nuclear fuel cycle and produces separated plutonium and other nuclear weapon-usable materials and vast amounts of extremely dangerous waste.

GNEP is incredibly expensive. Government estimates place the cost between $3 billion and $6 billion in its first five years. However, the Department of Energy (DOE) has provided no costs for operation and eventual decontamination. An estimate by the National Academies of Science states that reprocessing the spent fuel now targeted for Yucca Mountain would cost between $50 billion to $100 billion more than direct disposal (1996 dollars).

Despite the claims of proponents, reprocessing is not "recycling" and will not help the nation's waste problem—it will only spread the radioactive waste over a greater volume of waste streams. The waste from reprocessing is hotter than the original spent fuel and will still require storage in a geologic repository.

For a short period in the 1960s and 1970s, the U.S. government reprocessed spent nuclear fuel for use in commercial reactors until the practice was banned in 1976. Even though the ban on reprocessing was lifted in 1981, industry showed no interest due to its exorbitant costs and the availability of inexpensive uranium ore. Reprocessing for nuclear weapons other military programs took place in Washington State, South Carolina, and Idaho from the 1940s through the 1980s. These sites remain some of the most polluted places in the Western Hemisphere. The legacy of reprocessing is 100 million gallons of extremely dangerous high-level radioactive waste, stored in 243 leak-prone tanks and threatening crucial water resources.

Talking Points for Public Comments:

Global Ramifications.

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- Reprocessing at Hanford opens the door to other countries reprocessing, and then developing nuclear weapons as India did in the 70's.
- The US's 30 year moratorium on reprocessing worked - No non-nuclear weapons state has started reprocessing since the US stopped in the 70's.
- If the US restarts reprocessing, other countries will too. S. Korea, Brazil, and South Africa have already expressed interest in reprocessing
- The US has already told Canada and Australia that they might get a "waiver" to reprocess since they are friends of the US.
- GNEP further separates nuclear "haves" from "have-nots" – the US will be sending the message "do as we say, not as we do"
- In a time of nuclear uncertainty, with one new nuclear state, N. Korea, and Iran potentially seeking to create a weapon, this is not the time to restart reprocessing after 30 years.

Health

- Reprocessing is the most polluting part of the nuclear cycle
- Leukemia clusters near both the French and British reprocessing facilities and the role of radiation as an initiating or contributing factor has not been ruled out.
- Radiation is linked with Thyroid cancers and disorders
- Reprocessing also leaves enormous quantities of highly radioactive, acidic, liquid waste.
- France and Britain dump radioactive waste from reprocessing into the English Channel every year- doesn't look good for the Columbia River!

Reprocessing is not needed for nuke power, and Nuke power not the solution to climate change

- Reprocessing is not necessary for nuclear power. The US has had nuclear power for the past 30 years without reprocessing.
- Uranium is cheaply available right now and there is no demand for reprocessed fuels
- Nuclear power is dirty – CO2 is produced when mining Uranium and fossil fuels are used throughout the nuclear life cycle, including producing materials and facilities
- Dirty –reprocessing does not eliminate nuclear waste and no solution exists to deal with nuclear waste. Increasing nuclear power simply leaves a bigger nuclear waste problem to our children.
- Expensive – it would not exist without government subsidies. 2005 included $13 bil in tax breaks and subsidies for nuclear power – no other fuel source receives this much gov't support.
- Cost of nuclear power is increasing, while costs of renewable energy are falling. Wind is cheaper than nuclear and it has no waste, and no need for intense security.
- Reprocessed fuels would be a lot more expensive than newly mined uranium.
- **Slow-** building new plants is a slow process, while building wind and solar is much faster.
- **Dangerous -** Nuke power not as safe as renewables- 3 mile island, Chernobyl, worker incidents, potential terrorist incidents
- global warming increases danger – nuke plants in Europe shut down during 2006 heat waves.
- **Bad Example-** Nuke power sets a bad example – Iran!

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GNEP is Poorly Planned

- Hanford $8 bil over budget (more than double) and around a decade behind schedule
- Yucca mtn at least 20 years behind sched.
- **Not Cost Effective** DOE's estimated costs for the next 10 years have risen from $13 bil to $40 bil in the last year. According to a 1996 estimate by the National Academy of Sciences, reprocessing will "easily" cost taxpayers $100 bil. This estimate is only for existing U.S. fuel, and does not include waste from new domestic reactors or the importation of foreign waste

Wishful Thinking and the France Myth

- A French 2000 report concluded that reprocessing is uneconomical—costing about $25 bil more than a "once-through" fuel cycle
- France is building up a stockpile of separated plutonium from reprocessing (representing a dangerous nuclear weapons proliferation risk), because utilities don't use the costlier fuel

Reprocessing will not mean less waste -

- Reprocessing only reduces waste IF a fast reactor is used and the technology still has unresolved technical problems. Only 20 fast reactors have been built in the world, and only 3 currently operate. Very little waste has been run through fast reactors in France and Japan.
- Fast reactors have a history of being unsafe, with a low return on investment, with many never opening. Experts estimate that technologies for reprocessing, fast reactors, and plutonium fuel are 20-50 years away at best. The US, has tried to develop fast reactors for 50 years.
- Without fast reactors, the U.S. will end up in the same place as other countries: spending billions of dollars to end up with spent plutonium fuel that must be put in a geologic repository.
- Reprocessing puts plutonium in a state easier to steal. GNEP proposes technology for proliferation resistant fuel more advanced than what France and Japan currently use.
- **If it's really proliferation-resistant, would we let Iran have it?"**

Bad Location - Waste will permanently be at Hanford – just as the reprocessing facility in Morris, IL, (never opened due to technical failures) is now one of the largest nuclear waste dumps, Hanford will be a permanent dump for most of the waste brought to be reprocessed.

- **Reprocessing is the most polluting part of the nuclear cycle** – it's part of what made Hanford the mess it is today. Reprocesing at Hanford, the most contaminated site in the Western hemisphere, doesn't make sense.
- Haven't cleaned up current waste which is leaking into the Columbia and groundwater
- Hanford's Vitrification plant is not designed to handle the extra waste which would be brought to Hanford under GNEP. The new high-level waste would remain at Hanford in a more dangerous liquid state, making it likely that it will leak.
- Several congressmen worry that money for GNEP takes away from Hanford Clean up. We cannot afford to take any funds away from clean up.

Transportation- GNEP will mean more waste to come through Oregon

- In 1982, there were 2,000 shipments of nuke waste through Oregon. In 2005 there were 300 shipments of nuke waste through Oregon, on I82 and I84. The requirement

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that a GNEP site accept 63,000 metric tons of waste (the equivalent of all the waste to be stored at Yucca Mtn) would mean that shipments would revert to the 1982 levels of around 2,000/year.

- Most shipments do not require placards on trucks to notify the public.

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