

## NEWS FROM BEYOND NUCLEAR

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### **Congressman Upton Votes to Allow Foreign Radioactive Wastes to be Dumped in United States**

Washington, D.C.—While the U.S. House of Representatives voted yesterday by a wide bipartisan margin, 309 to 112, to block foreign radioactive waste imports into the U.S., Congressman Fred Upton (Republican, Michigan's 6<sup>th</sup> District) voted against the measure.

U.S. Representatives Bart Gordon (D-TN) and Jim Matheson (D-UT) were lead sponsors of H.R. 515, the Radioactive Import Deterrence (RID) Act. The bill is aimed at blocking a proposal by Salt Lake City, Utah-based radioactive waste disposal multi-national EnergySolutions. The company wants to import 20,000 tons of so-called "low" level radioactive waste from Italy. The imported waste would be "processed" in Tennessee – which could involve incineration, recycling into consumer products, and disposal in regular garbage dumps. Post-processing, the remaining 1,600 tons would then be dumped in shallow trenches in Clive, Utah west of Salt Lake City, near the Skull Valley Goshute Indian Reservation. The proposed Italian radioactive waste imports are seen by opponents as a precedent that would potentially open the floodgates for radioactive waste imports from around the world.

EnergySolutions' "Envirocare" dumpsite in Utah is one of very few disposal options for so-called "Class A" low-level radioactive wastes in the entire country. Michigan's atomic power reactors, including Palisades and Cook Units 1 and 2 in Congressman Upton's southwest Michigan district, ship their Class A wastes to this Utah dumpsite. Several congressional proponents of the RID Act argued that foreign radioactive waste imports would fill U.S. radioactive waste dumps such as Envirocare to capacity, leaving no room for U.S. wastes in the future, such as from Palisades and Cook nuclear power plants. Such "backed up" wastes would then begin accumulating at the reactors that generated them, with no clear disposal plan.

"There is already more than enough radioactive waste piled up on the Lake Michigan shoreline in southwest Michigan," said Kevin Kamps of Beyond Nuclear, a national nuclear watchdog group. "The high-level radioactive wastes at Palisades and Cook have nowhere to go, risking a catastrophic radioactivity release in the event of an accident or attack involving the indoor storage pools or the outdoor dry casks."

"Also, so-called 'low' level radioactive wastes are piling up at Palisades and Cook," Kamps added. "The hottest categories of 'low' level radioactive wastes already have nowhere to go, and now Congressman Upton has voted to import Italian atomic wastes as well. Since we don't know what to do with our own radioactive wastes, we certainly don't need to be importing other countries' atomic messes."

"Congressman Upton is supposed to represent the interests of the citizens and residents of his congressional district in southwest Michigan," Kamps said. "Instead, he seems to have cast his vote on behalf of the Italian nuclear power industry and a Utah-based radioactive waste disposal company."

The bill, dubbed S. 232 in the other congressional chamber, now moves on to the Senate, where Lamar Alexander, a Tennessee Republican, is the chief sponsor.

A short summary, and full length report, entitled “Fred Upton, One of the Nuclear Power Industry’s Best Friends in Congress,” can be viewed at: <http://www.beyondnuclear.org/nuclear-costs-resources/>