

**COMMENTS BEFORE
THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON AMERICA'S NUCLEAR FUTURE**

By Jeff Radford, Corrales New Mexico

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The name of this commission implies a broader scope than the topic which I understand is to be addressed here this afternoon: What to do with the nation's nuclear waste in the absence of disposal at Yucca Mountain. So first let me make clear what I think any sane response should encompass regarding nuclear waste disposal in the context of America's nuclear future. That is: for God's sake, stop producing more nuclear waste. It is patently irresponsible to have encouraged the production of ever-larger quantities of exceedingly long-lived radioactive waste for more than 60 years without having a sure-fire means of ridding the environment of this highly toxic threat.

But to the question of how to proceed with selecting an appropriate disposal site, my layman's experience of more than 35 years learning about this issue indicate three levels of guidance for this commission:

1. Insist upon strict adherence to primary site selection criteria. The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant is a good example of what not to do. One of the primary criteria was to avoid sites with significant natural resources. Oil, gas and potash deposits should have disqualified the site that WIPP occupies.

2. Expect and recognize compromised science when it appears, as it most assuredly will, having done so at Yucca Mountain and WIPP. Regarding the latter, I would refer the commission to the reputable work of Roger Y. Anderson, Larry Barrows and Richard Phillips to understand how the scientific process has been systematically compromised for political reasons.

3. Understand past failures in radioactive waste handling and disposal. My own understanding of the complexity of persistent failures in nuclear waste disposal are drawn from the experiences related to me by Robert A. Frosch, former Assistant Secretary of the Navy for research and development, also a former head of NASA and now Senior Associate for Science, Technology and Public Policy at Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

Thank you for your attention to my suggestions.