



AMERICA'S NUCLEAR SOLUTION

**Rod Baltzer, President & CEO
Waste Control Specialists**

Comments to Nuclear Regulatory Commission Public Meetings in Hobbs, New Mexico Monday, March 13 and Andrews, Texas Wednesday March 15, 2017.

I'm Rod Baltzer, President and CEO of WCS, and I'm here to ask for your support of our project. WCS has been a proud part of this community since 1995 when we started construction of our facility on the Texas/New Mexico border near Eunice. WCS began hazardous waste operations in 1997; radioactive storage and treatment in 1999; and radioactive waste disposal in 2012.

People have asked why WCS is trying to take high level waste when we originally told Andrews County we would only take low-level waste. In 2012, after WCS opened our low-level waste facility, the Blue Ribbon Committee appointed by President Obama said that consolidated interim storage was an important part of a waste management solution. People approached WCS to see if we were interested in high level waste storage and we approached the local community before we decided to pursue it.

We have approximately 170 employees at our facility – half of which live in NM and the other half in TX. WCS employees participate in both communities and WCS sponsors scholarships and supports organizations on both sides of the border.

The region has been found environmentally suitable for other nuclear facilities in addition to WCS, including URENCO, which was licensed by the NRC. The

geology, site characteristics, arid environment and other factors at WCS are ideal for storage of spent nuclear fuel. WCS is not sited over any drinking water source and is 10 miles south of, and not connected to, the Ogallala Aquifer as confirmed by the Texas State Water Development Board. The Board updated their maps based on oil and gas drilling information in the area, not on WCS data.

WCS is one of the most regulated businesses in the area with licenses, permits and authorizations from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency and numerous customer and contractual commitments.

WCS has a great safety and environmental track record. We have over 600 borings and over 400 monitoring wells are gauged (121 of which are sampled); 26 air monitoring stations (which is more than WIPP and URENCO combined); numerous soil, flora and fauna samples – all showing zero environmental impact from our operations. We hope this allows NRC to streamline their environmental review by relying on work that has already been done.

WCS anticipates that all of the fuel will arrive by rail in highly tested and extremely safe transport casks. Our partners AREVA TN and NAC are global leaders in spent fuel storage and transportations. AREVA alone has made more than 5,000 shipments of spent nuclear fuel without any radiological releases.

Commenters have said that DOE would take title and then taxpayers would be on the hook for this waste. Taxpayers are already on the hook for this waste as settlements for not picking up the waste are provided from the Judgement Fund and the taxpayers, not the rate payers pay for that.

Assuming a license is issued in 2019, we could construct the facility in approximately one-year and start operations in 2021. This will help WCS diversify our business and more fully utilize the entire facility. A healthy company

like WCS, that is not oil & gas dependent, is beneficial to diversify the local economies and provide higher paid, professional jobs for our children.

I did this at the NRC public meeting in Hobbs, so I'll do it here as well. Please stand if you support this project and WCS. [Large majority of the crowd stood.]