

Prohibition of Barge Shipments of High-Level Radioactive Waste on the Great Lakes

Whereas in February 2006, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP), which calls for the revival of commercial irradiated nuclear fuel reprocessing in the United States for the first time in over 35 years, and

Whereas reprocessing represents the dirtiest single stage of the nuclear fuel chain, causing an environmental disaster wherever it is carried out (such as at West Valley, New York, where six short years of reprocessing from 1966 to 1972 caused such severe radioactive contamination of the soil, surface water, and ground water that DOE estimates it will cost more than \$5 billion to clean up; if the contamination is not cleaned up, it will erode into Lake Erie and points downstream over time), and

Whereas DOE is currently evaluating 11 locations across the United States for the establishment of a full-scale commercial irradiated nuclear fuel reprocessing facility, and

Whereas the first step in any reprocessing scheme will be the shipment of waste by road, rail and waterway to the centralized reprocessing facility, and

Whereas DOE's TRAGIS computer routing code reveals that barge shipments of high-level radioactive waste (HLRW) could travel from nuclear power plants in WI, IL, MI, OH, and NY upon the waters of Lakes Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, bound for a reprocessing facility at Barnwell or Savannah River Site, South Carolina, as documented in the May 2007 report about GNEP transportation impacts on the Carolinas by John Sticpewich of the Common Sense at the Nuclear Crossroads Campaign, and

Whereas the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) design criteria for HLRW transportation casks only account for accidental underwater submersions to a depth of 200 meters (656 feet), while actual depths in the various Great Lakes actually exceed that depth in certain locations, and

Whereas the NRC does not require full-scale physical safety testing of HLRW shipping containers, and

Whereas the NRC does not require HLRW shipping casks to be designed to withstand terrorist attacks involving anti-tank missiles, high explosives, or shaped charges, and

Whereas each barge would carry a rail-sized HLRW shipping container, which would hold up to 240 times the long-lasting radioactivity (in terms of radioactive cesium isotopes alone) released by the Hiroshima atomic bomb, and

Whereas casks on barges fully loaded with irradiated nuclear fuel would weigh 100 to 150 tons, requiring special heavy-load cranes that could greatly complicate or delay emergency cask recovery operations, and

Whereas underwater submersion accidents could cause release of radioactive contaminants, or the inadvertent nuclear chain reaction of fissile materials still present within the HLRW due to the neutron-moderating effect of infiltrating water, and

Whereas the Great Lakes represent the source of drinking water, recreation, tourism, industry, and fisheries for many tens of millions of people, in the United States, Canada, and indigenous First Nations.

Therefore be it resolved that Great Lakes United urges Department of Energy to prohibit shipments of high-level radioactive waste on the Great Lakes and calls on the Department of Energy to abandon the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership revival of commercial irradiated nuclear fuel reprocessing.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF A RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY GREAT LAKES UNITED AT THE JUNE 17, 2007 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN TORONTO, ONTARIO.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly M. Flanagan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Molly M. Flanagan, Secretary