

were never once consulted about the placement of any of these facilities, nor have they ever been compensated for the immense threats to their environment and health. It looks to be getting worse; enter Private Fuel Storage (PFS). PFS is a Limited Liability Corporation, which was formed by a number of utilities and is headed by Minnesota based Northern States Power (NSP). "Limited Liability" means that individual utility companies are protected from suit if there is an accident in shipping waste to Utah, or at the facility itself. How clever. Because of continuous and successful opposition to the passage of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act by Congress, PFS made overtures to the Skull Valley Goshute Tribal Council. On December 26, 1996, PFS secured an agreement from the three member Tribal Council to lease 100 acres for construction of a nuclear waste dump. "This (Skull Valley project) is the bridge to Yucca Mountain," explains Scott Northard, project manager for PFS. Many utilities realize that if they don't have an interim dump, and the national nuclear waste dump at Yucca Mountain doesn't move forward quickly enough, they will have to shut down their nuclear power plants. In Minnesota, for instance, NSP's Prairie Island facility is licensed to operate until about 2014, but it only has the capacity to store its nuclear waste until 2007. And, that's what all the panic is about, and why all the money is being spent. Although the wastes are radioactive for 250,000 years, the Goshute lease is for 25 years initially, with an option to renew the lease for 25 additional years. The dump would be a parking lot, for up to 40,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel sitting in 4000 steel containers on a concrete pad outdoors. The federal government has spent almost \$2 billion, and, at least, two decades trying to solve the impossible dilemma of nuclear waste disposal. The nuclear utilities seem to believe that, with their "limited liability corporation", they can solve the problem in less than a decade. "Northern States Power (the lead utility) is just fortunate enough to have found a weak tribe that's going to put up with them and their partner utilities and their wastes," says Margene Bullcreek, a Goshute elder and leader of a grassroots effort to oppose the dump. While grassroots resistance at Skull Valley has continued, with a number of small victories for elders like Margene Bullcreek, PFS has been busy wooing the neighbors, to remove their opposition. On May 23, 2000, the Tooele County Commission signed an agreement giving PFS permission to operate in the proposed area in exchange for between \$90 and \$300 million paid to the county over the next forty years. That payment alone, dwarfs the entire budget of Tooele County, which in 1999 was \$18 million. "It's pretty clear that utilities are willing to spend billions to move it (the spent fuel) out of their back yard into ours, " said Utah Governor Mike Leavitt. Whether it is buying off private landholders and counties already beset with federal toxins, or continuing a legacy of dumping on the Indians, the PFS initiative is morally reprehensible, and an immense danger to the environment and public health- all the while allowing nuclear utilities to continue making immense profits. "The real issue is not the money," said Margene Bullcreek, who wants to stop the project. "The real issue is who we are as Native Americans and what we believe in. If we accept these wastes, we're going to lose our tradition and our need to keep the air, water, and animals clean." Margene's concerns should be all of ours, as we face the movement of up to 90,000 casks of nuclear waste across this country, on American highways and railways. Those wastes will pass through 43 states and within a half a mile of 50 million Americans. In the end, this may be a challenge for all of us; how to preserve clean air, and water for our children to come, and to treat our neighbors with respect.

Make Wind Not War

Honor the Earth supports front line struggles in Native America for environmental justice, alternative energy, restoration of buffalo herds to Native lands and advancement of thriving Native cultures. Sponsored by two national Native organizations – the Indigenous Women's Network and the Indigenous Environmental Network – Honor the Earth broadens awareness of Native environmental struggles and generates political and financial support for specific initiatives. Our sponsoring groups represent 200+ grassroots Native communities across North America. Since 1993, Honor has granted \$600,000 to grassroots Native environmental groups and created a groundswell of Native political involvement and social change.

Electricity generation capacity in the United States is about 600 gigawatts. Native reservations in the Great Plains possess the wind energy potential for over one-half of that amount. Placement of even a fraction of this energy into the U.S. electricity grid would make a significant impact on the standard of living for Native Americans, adding to a tribally owned and managed economic flow to benefit some of the most impoverished communities in the country. The benefits for the United States would also be substantial, bringing a vast amount of renewable electric energy to the market, reducing carbon emissions and helping to stop global warming.

Several wind turbine projects on reservations are underway or planned. A 750-megawatt wind turbine on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation (South Dakota) will be the first Native American-owned and -operated large-scale turbine in the country and is expected to be operational by early 2003. Turbine plans are in process on the Pine Ridge Reservation (SD) and the Yakima Reservation (WA).

The Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) has entered into long term contracts to provide energy throughout the region. Building access to this significant market for tribal energy represents one of the most strategic possibilities in the near future.

The purchase of "green tags" by businesses wishing to offset their CO2 emissions is generating funds to help tribes create wind energy sources. Expanding awareness and purchase of the "tags" is a prime opportunity for capital creation.

In essence, International Peace Pilgrimage is not alone in their vision for the future. We support you, safe travels.

Miigwech,

Organization: Honor the Earth

Contact Person: Winona LaDuke