



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA
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**Science and technology have taken a backseat to politics in the design
of our nuclear waste management program**

Columbia, South Carolina – The League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC) has been observing and educating its members and the public on nuclear issues since the 1970s, particularly activities at the Savannah River Site (SRS). As part of that effort the LWVSC has recently provided well-researched comments to the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future. **LWVSC recommends that high-level nuclear wastes at SRS and at other federal and commercial facilities stay safely managed where they are generated until there is a good final geologic repository. Near-term emphasis should be on closing and monitoring aging facilities and continuing the development of safe ways to treat and store wastes.**

After decades of ignoring leaking tanks of high-level nuclear waste, serious progress is underway in the funding and management of Cold War-era defense wastes at SRS. These wastes, once destined for Yucca Mountain, can safely stay in solidified form at SRS until a permanent repository is established. Another two decades may be required to manage the waste and close the site.

Nuclear industry and government agency reports cited in the LWVSC comments agree that "the development and commercialization of [nuclear spent fuel] recycling technologies is decades away", the cost of recovering fuel exceeds its value, and substantial high-level waste remains after reprocessing. Nevertheless, reprocessing industry boosters have invited commercial spent fuel to be sent to SRS. This invitation is linked to an unrealistically optimistic vision of commercial spent fuel reprocessing and to a quest for future jobs at SRS.

Recent proposals to bring spent commercial fuel to SRS are in response to the cancellation of Yucca Mountain as a permanent storage site, but similar proposals have been promoted for years. Unfortunately, the July 29 draft report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future (BRC) has recommended that development

of one or more centralized temporary storage sites be made a priority. The LWVSC responded to the draft report with concerns about South Carolina's likelihood as a "temporary" storage site for commercial spent fuel. Most observers expect that these "Consolidated Interim Storage Facilities" (CISF), could become permanent.

"All of the nation's communities and industries with concerns about nuclear waste must remain attentive and vigilant. That won't happen - especially in this economy - if commercial waste sits out of sight in a 'temporary' DOE facility. Widespread public and industry attention should improve the success of the important final repository program," said LWVSC member Suzanne Rhodes.

"As this country attempts to finance construction of new nuclear power plants with federal loan guarantees and ratepayer increases, we raise the cost of electrical power. Serious investments in energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy have been largely overlooked, even when they're competitive," said LWVSC Co-President Peggy Brown. "Off-shore wind is currently available for development to South Carolinians, and it's cheaper than future nuclear power plants. Turbines have withstood weather and even the terrible Japanese tsunami last March. Wall Street is investing in wind - why shouldn't South Carolinians?"

A complete copy of the LWVSC report along with referenced sources is available on the LWVSC website at www.lwvsc.org.