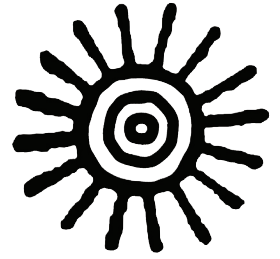


SUMMER 2022

www.nukebusters.org



# The CAN-Did Press

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CITIZENS AWARENESS NETWORK  
ACT TODAY TO CHANGE TOMORROW...

## The National Radioactive Waste Coalition

CAN works locally, regionally and nationally to defeat the nuclear industry's campaign to relabel nuclear power as a clean and renewable energy source. Whether pushing federal subsidies for aging nukes, promoting small modular reactors (SMRs) or breeder reactors as the answer to climate change, the industry is hard at work reinventing itself. To accomplish its goal, it must make its high-level nuclear waste problem disappear. For the industry, disappearing means targeting working poor Hispanic communities or Native tribes in the Southwest—communities with little political clout.

We realized we needed to move this issue to a national grassroots movement focused on nuclear waste. Our goal is to build a unified environmental movement to phase out dirty energy (fossil fuels, nuclear, woody biomass, trash incineration, etc.) and establish a 100 percent renewable energy standard, reject environmental racism, and recognize that working poor, rural, Black, Indigenous, and people of color have borne the brunt of polluting industries' waste streams. A broad coalition is necessary to ensure that the right to clean water, clean land, clean air, and a safe place to live are the bedrock of our energy policy. The needs of people and the planet must be upheld through a democratic and environmentally just process.

## Environmental Justice and Nuclear Waste

*Where do the Vermont Congressional Candidates Stand on Vermont Yankee's Radioactive Waste?*

Vermont Yankee shuttered in 2014, but problems remain. Over 40 years, Vermont Yankee created a serious amount of atomic waste. Now, 1,600 tons of the most highly radioactive waste sits in 58 casks out in the open near the banks of the Connecticut River. Neither Vermont nor the federal government knows what to do with it. Yet release of the radiation from these casks would leave our region uninhabitable for decades. Vermont isn't alone with this problem; it's the same at all reactor sites around the country.

The nuclear industry and politicians in Congress are pushing to send this waste to "temporary" Consolidated Interim Storage (CIS) sites in working poor, Hispanic, and Indigenous communities in the Southwest, an area that already carries a heavy burden

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*Fourth of July Parade in Brattleboro, Vermont—by Ann Darling*

There is a division over nuclear energy within the climate movement—in particular, between national advocates, on the one hand, and environmental justice and impacted communities on the other. We are committed to a unified national strategy to oppose nuclear power as a bridge fuel or a solution to address

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## Halt Holtec — Stop Dumping in Cape Cod Bay

With the expiration of the formal legislative session, the MA Legislature failed to pass any bill that would halt Holtec's plan to dump 1.1 million gallons of Pilgrim's radioactive wastewater into Cape Cod Bay. In addition, the disappointing collapse of the Economic Development bill included a section that would have initiated a two-year moratorium on dumping while a study was underway to evaluate the economic impacts and effects on our environment.

Another bill, H.4444, would have codified a current Massachusetts law that clearly prohibits discharge of radiological materials. House sponsors cited Holtec's planned action as "Crimes against Public Health" yet, that bill was sent to "study" and went nowhere.

Current state laws, particularly the Ocean Sanctuary Act [M.G.L. Ch. 132A, Sections 13 and 15(4)] which prohibits dumping in marine sanctuaries along with the clear language of the MA Attorney General's Office /Holtec Settlement Agreement in which Holtec agreed to comply with all Massachusetts standards

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# Vermont Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens' Advisory Panel (VT NDCAP)

CAN members continue to participate in the Vermont Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens' Advisory Panel (VT NDCAP) meetings and its Nuclear Waste Policy Committee (FNWPC). In 2022, there have been only two meetings of the full Panel, with two more planned in September and December. The Committee has met four times this year.

Vermont Yankee is the first commercial reactor bought by a decommissioning company (as opposed to being decommissioned by the owners who generated power from the nuke). It's a new business model that others are following. From where I sit, this makes the meetings interesting; precedents are being set, legal gray areas surface, and there is room for citizen advocacy. It's important that CAN is there to question and offer opinions—which have influenced decisions. We encourage you to join us. Meetings are hybrid virtual and in-person. Information about them is posted on the CAN website (<http://nukebusters.org>) and can also be found on the Vermont Department of Public Service website (<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/electric/ndcap>).

At each full Panel meeting, NorthStar gives an overview of decommissioning progress, and State agencies provide information from their monitoring. All the highly radioactive components, along with the fuel, will be on the pad in Vernon by October 2022. As of May, 418 shipments of lower-level radioactive waste (some of which is still plenty dangerous) left Vernon—23,750 tons and 35,500 curies. The VY site has non-radioactive contamination, too. For instance, there was (fossil) fuel-contaminated soil in the turbine building and fuel oil tank, which NorthStar remediated. The Army Corps of Engineers inspected Riverbank restoration in June.

## **Consent-Based Siting**

A major event for VT NDCAP earlier this year entailed sending consensus comments to the US Department of Energy (DoE), which sought public input from local communities on consent for siting a Federal Central Interim Storage Facility (CISF) for high-level nuclear waste (HLNW). The Committee met with representatives from the DoE, discussed its position, and drafted comments to DoE, which then received approval from the full Panel.

This is a “temporary” solution. There is no long term solution! Here are the key points:

1. Interim storage must be coupled with development of a permanent repository. Asking for consent for siting before the permanent repository is found will undermine public confidence in DoE and its consent-based siting process.

2. The geology and water flow at a potential site should be thoroughly investigated before any community is asked for consent.

3. Moving HLNW should happen only once. CAN agrees with these points and helped to shape them through our participation. For the full VT NDCAP statement, go to <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/vt-ndcap-response-doe-consent-based-siting-rfi>

It is important to understand that this federal process is separate from the private CISF sites developing in New Mexico (by Holtec) and Texas (by Interim Storage Partners, a NorthStar affiliate). The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) already licensed one and will soon license the other. No consent process is required. State, local, and tribal governments oppose these facilities and are fighting to protect their communities.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- Contact your legislators. Ask them where they stand on CIS and environmental justice. Urge them to reject the industry's targeting of working poor, Hispanic communities in the Southwest (Contact information for Vermont legislators are mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter).

- Write a letter to the editor for the newspaper about the issue. If you need help or some suggestions, contact CAN via our website <http://nukebusters.org/contact.shtml> or give us a call at 413-339-4374.

## **Holtec: There Can't Be an Accident**

At another meeting, Holtec, manufacturer of the casks at VY, owns the proposed CISF site in New Mexico. The casks are triple-layer, with an inner steel container holding the fuel; it's encased in concrete (no rebar, no air contact—contact with the air can cause the fuel to heat up and release radiation), all surrounded by more steel. Holtec maintains that, when transported, the canisters can't cause a “critical incident.” Here is what took the CAN members' collective breath away: the Holtec representative said “[t]here's no pathway for a catastrophic event! When asked by a Panel member what Holtec would do if a cask emitted radiation, Holtec said, “It's a situation that can't occur.”

## **Public Outreach**

On the less technical side, I asked the Chair what was happening with public outreach and education and the website changes that had been discussed at previous meetings. Nothing! The Chair stated that she “appreciates the nudge.” I've raised these issues before. Panel members are understandably too busy to do public outreach. If the Panel is really serious about public involvement, they would need to hire someone. Yet they only asked NorthStar to commit to paying \$30,000 a year to fund their efforts at public involvement. As it is, all they get is input from a few die-hard CAN members. We'd love to have you join us. If you want to contact me, email me at [aadejd@hotmail.com](mailto:aadejd@hotmail.com).

- Ann Darling, retired social worker and community organizer, CAN Board member, and member of Climate Action Now of Western Massachusetts.

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# National Radioactive Waste Coalition

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climate disruption. The industry and federal government's failure to create a solution for disposal of high-level nuclear waste is an environmental crisis amassing at reactor sites everywhere. This waste exposes the hypocrisy of, and creates a public relations nightmare for, an industry attempting to sell itself as a "green" solution.

To make its waste problem disappear, the industry is pushing to consolidate its waste in "interim" storage sites in localities with no political clout. The areas currently targeted are working poor Latino communities in the Southwest that already carry a heavy burden of pollution from fossil fuels and toxic and radioactive waste.

The crisis in waste is worldwide: we only see the tip of a mammoth iceberg through reactor closures, decommissioning, and the industry's agenda. With the closure of reactors, New England is Ground Zero for the industry's efforts to gain federal approval for this scheme. The Southwest is the target; the Midwest is the transportation corridor; Washington, DC is the hub for major environmental groups. The industry pits reactor and targeted communities against each other over which will suffer the ultimate sacrifice of having the waste in their backyard.

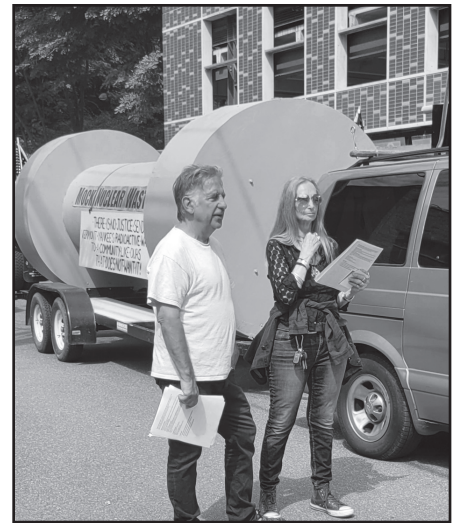
Some leaders in the climate action movement think nuclear should be in the energy mix as a transition away from fossil fuels, while others oppose it—and even these often neglect to mention it in their organizing and media. We need to build bridges in the anti-nuclear and climate action movements, from the grassroots up, in order to pressure local and national groups to openly oppose nuclear energy and the interim consolidation of waste.

A fractured environmental movement helps the nuclear industry, as well as other polluting industries, avoid accountability and promote false solutions. Due to limited capacity movement-wide, many environmental groups take no position on nuclear power. This must change.

CAN, along with other groups, organized a National

Grassroots Radioactive Waste Coalition with over 45 groups participating. We are the regional coordinator for New England and a member of the Coalition's steering committee. We organize participation, create strategy, and provide a tool kit for grassroots organizing. The Coalition's focus is to create unified strategic actions on commercial high-level nuclear waste (HLNW) policy including: a) Increase protections for on-site dry cask storage. b) Defeat Interim Storage and Yucca Mountain as solutions. c) Educate the public on transportation issues. d) Advocate for a permanent solution that is both scientifically sound and environmentally just.

- Deb Katz, Executive Director Citizens Awareness Network



*Deb Katz and Bob Bady waiting for the parade to start on the 4th of July in Brattleboro, VT—by Ann Darling*

# Halt Holtec — Stop Dumping in Cape Cod Bay

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and regulations that prohibit dumping or discharging Pilgrim's nuclear waste water, are being dismissed by Holtec. Cape Cod Bay, as well as Plymouth, Kingston, and Duxbury Bays, are all protected under this law. How will that happen?

## **Take Action: Ask the AG to Protect the Bay!**

We now need to look to Attorney General Maura Healy because, as the People's Lawyer, she has the authority to stop the dumping. The irreparable damage to our local economies that would occur is real and should cause alarm. Holtec plans to announce their discharge timeline by September/October. As of today, the state has not shared any plans to enforce these regulations. The clock is ticking and we need to act now.

How do we know dumping is imminent? At the recent Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel (NDCAP) meeting in Plymouth, Holtec manager David Noyes confidently declared, "We will not say that we will not discharge waste into Plymouth Bay." Pure hubris! Holtec plans to dump with impunity!

At the same meeting, Holtec refused to agree that it would not dump without Environmental Protection Agency permission, despite the fact that the EPA has told Holtec on no uncertain terms that Pilgrim's current permit does not allow discharge of spent

fuel pool water into Cape Cod Bay. And while the EPA scathingly rejected Holtec's claims regarding its permit, the agency unfortunately lacks sufficient enforcement authority and resources to protect our waters and prevent dumping. A fine for dumping is much less than the cost to truck to a facility (like Vermont Yankee chose to do) so there is no incentive for Holtec to reframe from dumping.

Attorney General Maura Healey must seek a preliminary injunction to halt Holtec. The state must now prevent the dumping by enforcing current laws to protect the health of our communities, the livelihoods of the fishing, real estate, and tourist industries, and the habitat of marine life. We need AG Healey to step up now and take action to Save Our Bay!

Contact AG Maura Healy and ask her to protect Cape Cod Bay. <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-attorney-general-maura-healey> or call one of her offices:

Boston (617) 727-2200  
New Bedford (508) 990-9700  
Springfield (413) 784-1240  
Worcester (508) 792-7600

- Diane Turco, Director, Cape Downwinders,  
CAN Board Member





# Environmental Justice and Nuclear Waste

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of nuclear contamination. The folks there don't believe the move will be temporary and don't want the waste there. CIS is environmental racism, pure and simple.

We all want the waste from Vermont Yankee gone, but we need to think about where it would go. Do we want "our" waste to contaminate someone else's home? As the congressional elections approach it is very important to find out where the candidates stand on nuclear waste storage.

Recently, the Vermont legislature passed The Environmental Justice Act (Act 154) requiring State agencies to incorporate environmental justice (EJ) into their work, rules, and procedures as they affect Vermonters. Act 154 says that Vermont will no longer allow the Vermonters the most burdened by pollution—rural, Indigenous, people of color—to be unjustly treated. It sets out a principled, ethical standard for our state to follow. Does this standard of environmental justice end at the border?! We need to let our House candidates know that plans for Consolidated Interim Storage are unjust and contrary to Vermont's values.

## *ASK THE CANDIDATES WHERE THEY STAND!*

- Are they aware of Consolidated Interim Storage plans? What do they think about them? Will they stand for environmental justice in Congress?
- Why isn't there more government and industry investment in developing a permanent waste solution?
- With its waste problem, why is nuclear promoted as a "green" solution to climate change?

## **Contact the VT Congressional Candidates now!**

*The Democratic candidate for the US House of Representatives is:*  
Becca Balint  
Email: [bbalint@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:bbalint@leg.state.vt.us)  
Website: <https://www.beccabalint.com/>

*The Republican candidate for the US House of Representatives is:*  
Liam Madden  
Email: <https://rebirthdemocracy.com/contact>  
Website: <https://rebirthdemocracy.com/>

### **Thank You from CAN Staff & Board We couldn't do it without you!**

Bob Bady • Boston Downwinders • C 10 Foundation  
Climate Action Now • Paul Burton • Cape Downwinders  
Connie Childs • Dean's Beans • Lionel Delevingne • Court Dorsey  
Kristina Graham • Jerry Greenfield & Elizabeth Skarie Foundation  
Guacamole Foundation • Gerry Hersh • Dan Keller  
Lintilhac Foundation • Julian Mejia  
Nuclear Information and Resource Service • Rothschild Foundation  
Nelia Sargent & Scott Neilsen • Michael Schreiber  
Safe & Green Campaign Shantigar Foundation  
Bob Stannard • Van Itallie Foundation  
Vermont Yankee Decommissioning Alliance • Rae C Wright



*Activist and actor Court Dorsey in the role of "Will Nukem" at the People's Science Fair.*

## **We Can Bring Our Mock Cask to Your Event**

CAN is organizing monthly road trips to events in Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Connecticut, using our "mock" cask as a draw to elicit questions and concerns about nuclear energy and its dangerous waste problem.

If you are interested in adding an educative aspect to your event, learning why nuclear energy is NOT a solution to climate change, please contact us at: [can@nukebusters.org](mailto:can@nukebusters.org).

We can also help your group evolve your position on nuclear waste and what constitutes a "just" solution in the form of a workshop or presentation.

Contact CAN - <http://nukebusters.org> or 413-339-4374



*Board member Chris Nord and CAN Organizer Bob Bady have been working hard to get the cask in tip-top shape for the road this summer and fall.*

**[www.nukebusters.org](http://www.nukebusters.org)**