November 13, 2014

Chairman Robert Wilson

Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact Commission

3616 Far West Blvd., Suite 117, #294

Austin, TX 78731

Re: My final remarks: Optimize. Say no. Be the protagonist.

Dear Chairman Wilson and Commissioners,

Regrets that I cannot be with you in person. I am on my way to D.C. to a conference meant to address the nationwide problems caused by inappropriate handling of nuclear materials. Throughout the years, and in keeping with the principle of checks and balances in government, I have strived to ensure that oversight never wanes and protective measures never falter.

These should, and must, be the uncompromising goals of this Compact Commission, as well as the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). The transportation and storage of radioactive waste demands it. For that reason, the trends that have unfolded over the past few years are unfortunate and my office has often raised concerns to both agencies.

Three principles have guided my office and I would like to pass them on:

* Always optimize.
  + Continuously strive to optimize the safety of disposal by keeping track of details about imported wastes' contents, isotopes, and radioactivity.
  + It is counterproductive to change import/export forms to eliminate the need to include certain data. Data unneeded today may become important tomorrow.
* Just say no.
  + Say no to an import application once in a while.
  + Show a willingness to say no (or at least, not yet) to proposals that would "push the regulatory envelope" to benefit economic interests. This comes at the expense of the general public's health and safety.
  + Urge the closing of the loophole allowing generators to send reclassified low-level radioactive waste to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) facility, since this denies the state of fees and the Compact Commission of its oversight.
* Be the protagonist.
  + Be proactive in fulfilling your duties. The current passive approach has allowed its oversight capabilities and authority to shrink.
  + As Commissioners, you can both trust the TCEQ to do its job and still actively engage in evaluating and questioning business practices by brokers, generators, and Waste Control Specialists itself.

Optimize. Say no. Be the protagonist. This Compact Commission still has potential. Thank you for listening.

Best regards,

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State Representative Lon Burnam