

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
Department of the Senate
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To the Committee Secretary,

I write in support of a repeal of the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act (CRWMA). I urge your support for the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act (Repeal and Consequential Amendment) Bill 2008.

In 2006, the ALP promised they would repeal this Act, if elected. Eleven months since the ALP took Federal office, the repeal is outstanding. Prime Minister Rudd was elected on a platform of keeping all election promises – the party's commitment to repealing the CRWMA is no exception.

Additionally, in April of this year the NT ALP noted that the CRWMA and amendments had allowed the nomination of Muckaty as a site for a radioactive waste dump, despite opposition from traditional owners of the land, from concerned residents of the Northern Territory, and other Australians.

The CRWMA must be repealed because it provides for the imposition of radioactive waste dumps on communities which are opposed to the siting of this toxic legacy on their lands without their consent. This inherent inequity perpetuates the historical imposition of the dangerous burdens of the nuclear industry on First Nations here in this country.

Further, the CRWMA prohibits any avenue of appeal under the Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act. This is not only undemocratic, but does not sufficiently allow for all Australians to engage rigorously with decisions relating to stages of the nuclear cycle as they operate in this country.

It is imperative that all Australians be able to appeal decisions by government and industry to continue to develop the nuclear industry in this country; indeed, to expose the short-sightedness of continuing to support and expand an industry which, after more than fifty years of operation, still has no proven and safe method of disposing of its toxic waste anywhere in the world. That this poor business planning and environmental devastation would continue to be imposed, in the form of a radioactive waste dump, on First Nations who are clearly opposed, is shameful.

In addition, none of the latest raft of proposed sites was nominated in the 1997 national study to find a site for a radioactive waste dump. This begs the question: are these sites nominated on the basis of the best scientific analysis, or are they politically convenient?

It would seem unwise for Labor to perpetuate the Howard government's plan for siting radioactive waste dumps irrespective of local community concern, available science, and internationally held opinion that the nuclear industry is dangerous and unnecessary.

Sincerely,

Amelia Young