

# THE SOUTHWEST IS NOT THE PLACE FOR THE WORLD'S LARGEST RADIOACTIVE WASTE DUMP!

Two companies are proposing to build nuclear waste facilities in New Mexico and Texas for the most toxic and dangerous type of nuclear waste called High-Level Radioactive Waste (HLRW), also known as “spent” or irradiated fuel from commercial nuclear power plants.

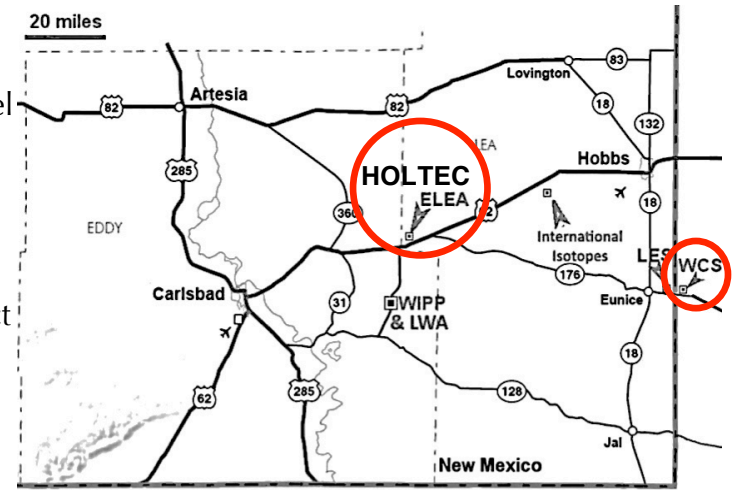
HLRW contains: plutonium, uranium, strontium, and cesium. It will be radioactive for *millions of years* and is *not* like the waste at the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP)—it is far worse!

The two companies, Holtec International and Waste Control Specialists (WCS), are applying for licenses from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to build and operate temporary waste dumps for HLRW, known as Consolidated “Interim” Storage (CIS) facilities. Both

are currently going through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, and both are being legally challenged by community groups within the NRC’s Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB).

**Holtec International is working with New Mexico-based Eddy-Lea Energy Alliance, LLC (ELEA) to build world’s largest HLRW dump between Carlsbad & Hobbs, just north of WIPP.**

- Proposed new CIS facility to store up to 173,600 metric tons of HLRW—more than double the existing amount in U.S. today—for 40 years, with two possible 40-year extensions (120 years total).
- NRC received an estimated 30,000+ public comments opposing Holtec during NEPA scoping period, but only recognized 6,665.
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and public hearings expected in 2020.
- ASLB determined only 2 of 7 challengers had legal standing and denied all legal arguments.



Above: Southeast New Mexico  
Source: <https://historecisf.com>

**Waste Control Specialists (WCS) operates a low-level radioactive and hazardous waste treatment and disposal facility for nuclear power and weapons waste east of Eunie in Andrews County, Texas. WCS is working with Orano USA as Interim Storage Partners (ISP) to bring high-level waste to its existing low-level facility.**

- Proposal to add 5,000 metric tons of HLRW to existing low-level facility with potential to expand to 40,000 metric tons—about half the amount of HLRW in U.S. today
- NRC received approximately 40,000+ public comments opposing CIS application during NEPA scoping period.
- ASLB hearing held in Midland, TX July 10-11, 2019, determination expected in late August.

## CONSOLIDATED “INTERIM” STORAGE (CIS) IS ILLEGAL!

According to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, as amended, the Department of Energy (DOE) is not allowed to take title and liability of nuclear reactor waste unless a permanent repository is already built *and* operating. Both applications from Holtec and ISP rely on the premise that the DOE will be responsible for HLRW if transported to and stored at a CIS facility. Local community groups and national environmental organizations are legally challenging the proposals for CIS and the NRC, itself, for even considering these applications when there is *no permanent repository currently operating*. Other legal arguments submitted to the ASLB include: cumulative risks and impacts to water, environment, wildlife, and historic properties at the sites and along transport routes; possible impacts from fracking and potash mining in the area; risk of temporary dumps becoming permanent; and insufficient financial assurances.

# TRANSPORT IS RISKY AND ROUTES ARE UNKNOWN

We can only predict transportation routes from the 100+ U.S. power reactors to CIS sites. Proposed transport of waste would include thousands of routine shipments for decades on rails, roads, and waterways across the U.S.

Most transport would be by rail, but routes will not be approved by USDOT and NRC until after licensing is complete. Exact train routes will not be determined until the actual time of transport when decided by rail companies.

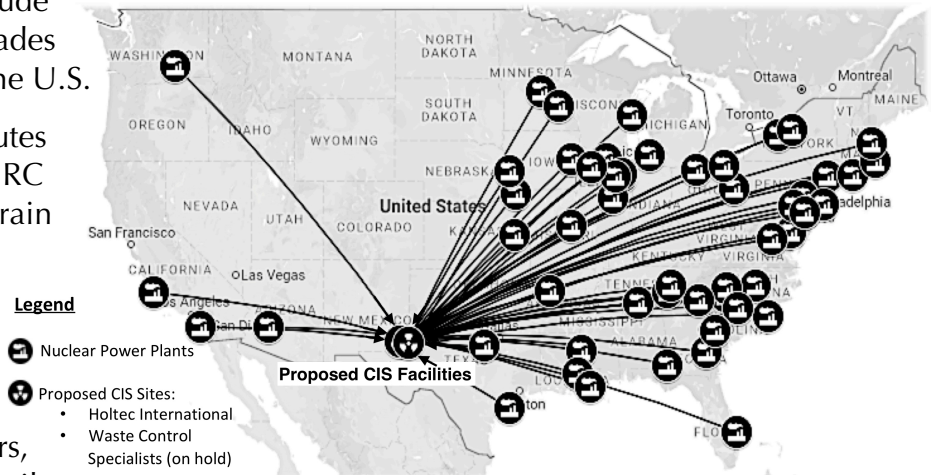
Existing railways were not built to withstand the weight of waste containers, and there are no known plans for new rails

or renovations. Residents, rail companies, policymakers, and emergency responders need to know exact routes in order to properly prepare *before* any high-level radioactive waste is allowed to move.

CIS facilities are intended to be temporary. If a permanent repository is opened, waste could be moved twice, increasing the total time of transport and related risks. Unless absolutely necessary, waste should stay closest to where it was produced to reduce risks of accidents, exposure, and acts of malice.

## Proposed Centralized Interim Storage (CIS) Facilities & Nuclear Power Plants Across the U.S.

Map created by Nuclear Issues Study Group ([www.nuclearnewmexico.com/NISG](http://www.nuclearnewmexico.com/NISG))



## ISSUES AND RISKS: WHY CONSOLIDATING REACTOR WASTE IS A BAD IDEA

- Temporary storage facilities could become “de facto” permanent dumps without meeting the requirements for permanent isolation.
- In close proximity, some exposure to radiation from waste containers during transport is possible. Direct exposure to unshielded irradiated fuel rods is deadly.
- The Department of Energy (DOE) calculated that for rail transport of HLRW to Yucca Mountain in Nevada, train accidents were anticipated at a rate of 1 for every 10,000 shipments—it’s not a matter of *if* there will be accidents, but *when* and *where*.
- A 1985 DOE report found that a severe accident involving one radioactive waste container releasing only a small amount of waste could contaminate a 42-square mile area, with cleanup costs exceeding \$620M (\$1.4B with inflation) in a rural area with recovery time estimated to take up to 460 days, and in an urban area cleanup could cost up to \$2B (\$6.1B with inflation) and recovery time would be much more time-consuming.
- Temporary storage means that waste from reactors could be moved more than once, increasing risks of accidents, exposure, and terrorism nationwide.

Sources: [www.nrc.gov](http://www.nrc.gov) (search: CISF), <http://www.state.nv.us/nucwaste>, [BeyondNuclear.org/Centralized-Storage](http://BeyondNuclear.org/Centralized-Storage), [NoNuclearWaste.org](http://NoNuclearWaste.org), [NIRS.org/Campaigns/Dont-Waste-America](http://NIRS.org/Campaigns/Dont-Waste-America), [historecisf.com](http://historecisf.com), [holtecinternational.com](http://holtecinternational.com), [interimstoragepartners.com](http://interimstoragepartners.com)

## STAY INFORMED! KEEP AN EYE ON THE FEDERAL BUDGET AND THESE BILLS IN CONGRESS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO PUSH FORWARD CIS: S. 1234, H.R. 2699, AND H.R. 3136



Nuclear Issues Study Group (NISG) is a volunteer community organization based in Albuquerque, NM. Contact NISG: [protectnewmexico@gmail.com](mailto:protectnewmexico@gmail.com), 505 879 8547

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