

On the Nuclear Wasting of South Carolina

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Environment](#)

The Canadian shipments of nuclear waste to the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River Site are currently underway. Without effect, the Anishinabek Nation and Iroquois Caucus have asked the Canadian Government to forego transporting the hazardous materials, and to downgrade the nuclear waste at home in Chalk River. This was also suggested by Savannah River Site Watch in South Carolina to spare from the chance of irradiation of people, land, rivers and water between the two sites.

With Department of Energy permission (*sic*) Indonesia is able to downgrade its nuclear waste at home. An environmental coalition of *Savannah River Site Watch*, the *Sierra Club*, *Beyond Nuclear*, *Nuclear Information and Resource Service*, *Lone Tree Council*, *Citizens for Alternatives to Chemical Contamination*, *Environmentalists Inc.*, has tried unsuccessfully to stop the transport through court action. American courts remain unable to protect the people from the risks of nuclear energy. Joining the American groups in requests to government were the Canadian groups of *Sierra Club Canada Foundation*, *National Council of Women of Canada*, *Concerned Citizens of Renfrew County*, *Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility*, *Durham Nuclear Awareness*, whose combined efforts proved equally ineffective.

The transport of the 23,000 litres scheduled is considered hazardous due to the distance, through populated areas, and possibly faulty lead "pigs" (containers). In the first batch delivered to the Savannah River Plant this April a "hot spot" was found in the side of a container. Supposedly the site has facilities to re-process highly enriched uranium. Yet it is also said that the State has no way to dispose of the plutonium waste already on hand at the site, modestly estimated at 13 tons in 2016 (Unofficial estimates of plutonium at SRS run as high as 30 tons). In March 2016 there was public resistance to the shipment of 331Kg of weapons grade plutonium waste from Japan to the Savannah River Site. In 2014 *Nights Lantern* [noted](#) the report of agreement between the German nuclear industry and U.S. Department of Energy to store German nuclear waste. See also "[Nuclear Notes: the Savannah River Watershed](#)".

Historical note: as South Carolina becomes an irrecoverable holding area and dumping ground for nuclear waste, scarred since the 1950's by radiation from uranium processing, overburdening the Savannah River Site is likely to further endanger the habitat of Georgia and South Carolina. Families of all races are victim. Both white and Black Racism and the hatreds of historically separated groups work against the South cohering in a unified resistance. Actions such as the [Georgia Prison Strike](#) or the [Free Alabama Movement](#) suggest there is unity when the oppression becomes terminal. The region's people need to be informed. [Background](#).

Partial sources online:

“South Carolina governor urges U.S. to divert plutonium from Japan,” Aaron Sheldrick & Megan Cassella, Mar 24, 2016, *Reuters*;

“Highly Radioactive Liquid Shipments Have Begun – But Can Still be Stopped,” Gordon Edwards, May 14 2017, *Eaglewatch*;

“2016/03/18 NGO Joint Statement Against Secret Plutonium Shipment in Tokai-mura,” March 18, 2016, *Greenpeace*;

“First shipment of radioactive liquid waste from Canada received at Savannah River, hotspot detected,” Virginia Daffron, May 15, 2017, *Mountain Xpress*;

“Liquid Nuclear Waste Convoys A Threat to the Waters of the Great Lakes,” Press release, Oct. 3, 2016, *Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility*.

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