



What's the Deal with Nuclear Waste?

1) **What's the problem?**

No one wants nuclear waste in their backyard. In Southern California, however, 3.6 million pounds of highly-radioactive waste are stranded at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, which closed in 2012. Some 8.4 million people live within 50 miles of the storage facility. That's a lot of people with a lot of waste in their backyards. The owner of the San Onofre plant has not provided an acceptable plan for long-term storage and containment of the waste. The same problem exists at nuclear power plants across California and throughout the nation.

2) **Isn't there a safe place to put nuclear waste?**

Yucca Mountain, near Las Vegas, was selected as a permanent storage facility for nuclear waste. But plans to open the repository failed in Congress after more than 30 years of work and \$15 billion spent. Now, Nevada and New Mexico have flat-out refused to provide storage for the nation's nuclear waste.

3) **How does this affect me and my family?**

All nuclear power plants need to be near a source of water for cooling. That means our rivers, lakes, and oceans are at risk of contamination. If natural disasters, accidents or terrorist activity were to expose radioactive material to the atmosphere, human health and the environment could be imperiled. Upon human exposure the invisible radioactive particles cause lasting genetic damage for generations. Young children and pregnant women are the most susceptible to this damage.

4) **What is the solution?**

Technology, canisters and facilities for safer storage are available. The San Onofre owner, Southern California Edison, should draw from its \$4 billion decommissioning trust fund to pay for robust nuclear waste containment options to keep us safe. Ratepayers contributed to that fund every month with their electricity bills.

5) **Who is paying to decommission San Onofre and other nuclear power plants?**

All of us. Ratepayers pay for the decommissioning process.

6) **Where is the radioactive waste from nuclear power plants stored?**

At more than 60 nuclear power plants across the country radioactive waste is stored right on-site. At present, the United States has no nationally-approved facility for temporary or permanent storage of nuclear waste. After 70 years of nuclear power plant operation, this storage problem remains.

7) **How much radioactive waste is there in the USA?**

Across the United States, nearly 90,000 tons of radioactive waste is stranded at more than 60 sites. At San Onofre, 3.6 million pounds of high-level radioactive waste is housed in a vault 100 feet from the ocean at San Onofre State Beach.

8) **Who is responsible for managing the waste?**

Utility companies handle the radioactive material at nuclear power plants.

