

COMMITTEE TO BRIDGE THE GAP

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**BOXER CALLS ON BABBITT TO DEMAND FULL AND FAIR WARD VALLEY
HEARING, CITES CONCERNS ABOUT HEARING PROCESS & ISSUES**

California Senator Barbara Boxer has called on Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt to assure that the proposed hearing on the Ward Valley radioactive waste disposal facility include full “procedural safeguards” and “address all outstanding health and safety issues.” Boxer said, “An effective adjudicatory hearing is crucial to the resolution of public doubts about the safety and environmental risks associated with the repository.” Boxer’s concerns, expressed in a letter to Babbitt, stand in stark contrast to the hearing procedures proposed by California Governor Pete Wilson.

Attention is now focused on Babbitt, who can insist on the safeguards requested by Boxer or give in to the hearing procedures sought by Wilson. Wilson and the nuclear industry are proposing to dump large quantities of radioactive waste, virtually all of it from nuclear power plants, in unlined trenches just 19 miles from the Colorado River.

In her letter to Babbitt, Boxer also suggested several potential hearing officers to preside over the proposed hearing. Boxer wrote that the “hearing officer must ensure that . . . each party receives a full and fair opportunity to present its arguments.”

Last Thursday, Wilson offered to hold an extremely restricted hearing that would lack all the procedural safeguards sought by Boxer. At the same time, Wilson went ahead and issued an operating license for the proposed radioactive waste dump –before the hearing is even conducted. Babbitt controls the land on which the dump is to be sited. Last month, Babbitt wrote Wilson and insisted that a hearing be held to address unresolved problems with the proposed facility. For more information, contact Committee to Bridge the Gap at (310) 478-0829.

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