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INTERVENTION MOTIONS FILED TO OPPOSE DUMP CONTRACTOR'S ATTEMPT TO PREVENT
HEARING ON PROPOSED NUCLEAR WASTE SITE

Committee to Bridge the Gap, Physicians Group, Indian Tribes, Scientists
and Radiation Victims Seek to Protect Interests in Outcome of Lawsuit

SACRAMENTO – Groups opposing plans to build a radioactive waste dump near the Colorado River announced today that they have filed motions to intervene in a lawsuit that could halt plans for a formal hearing to resolve outstanding safety and technical issues associated with the proposed facility.

The lawsuit, filed by US Ecology, the contractor named to operate the facility, and other dump proponents, seeks to prevent the State of California from conducting an adjudicatory hearing over the proposal to build a radioactive waste dump in Ward Valley, California.

The groups having filed motions to intervene in the suit include Committee to Bridge the Gap, a non-profit public interest group that has identified several outstanding health and safety issues, Pacific Region Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Chemehuevi, Colorado River, and Fort Mojave Indian Tribes, the Southern California Federation of Scientists, and the National Association of Radiation Survivors. Other proposed interveners include the City of Needles, located 23 miles east of Ward Valley, and the Senate Rules Committee, cited in the suit as having “coerced” public health officials into agreeing to hold the upcoming adjudicatory hearing.

The groups contend they should be allowed to protect their interests in the upcoming hearing. In their intervention motions, the groups assert that their interests may not be adequately protected by the state agencies and officials named in the suit. They note that the Department of Health Services, the primary respondent, has “at times been substantially uncooperative” in assuring the public a full adjudicatory hearing.

US Ecology operates leaking and closed radioactive waste facilities in Maxey Flats, Kentucky, and Sheffield, Illinois. Their suit demands that a licensing decision be made in the absence of a positive safety finding by an independent Administrative Law Judge, who is scheduled to soon commence the adjudicatory hearings. The hearings would include an Opportunity to examine previously unreleased documents related to the case, to present expert testimony, and to cross-examine witnesses.

US Ecology originally filed the suit in the California Supreme Court, which promptly transferred the case to an appellate court based in Sacramento.

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