

11 August 1993

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**COMMITTEE TO BRIDGE THE GAP RESPONSE TO SEC. BABBITT 'S DEMAND
THAT GOV. WILSON HOLD PROMISED WARD VALLEY ADJUDICATORY
HEARING**

Statement of Dr. Joseph Lyou, Executive Director, Committee to Bridge the Gap

Interior Sec. Bruce Babbitt is to be congratulated for insisting that the Wilson Administration keep its promise to hold adjudicatory hearing on the proposed Ward Valley radioactive waste facility. This is a big step in the right direction. Babbitt recognizes the need to resolve the many outstanding problems with the proposed radioactive waste dump. Kudos to Babbitt, but now it's up to Wilson to agree to a full and fair evidentiary process.

Without knowing Wilson's response to Babbitt's letter, we have to reserve final judgment on the proposed hearing procedures. The devil is in the details and the details have yet to be worked out. Babbitt will have to make sure that Wilson doesn't substitute a kangaroo court for a true adjudicatory hearing. The public cannot accept anything less than a full and fair adjudicatory hearing, one that addresses all the outstanding safety and environmental issues.

If Wilson and the nuclear industry hadn't gone to court to block the hearing, the hearing would have been over a long time ago. Originally, 16 months ago, Wilson agreed to an adjudicatory hearing process that would have taken only eight months. Wilson and the nuclear industry only have themselves to blame for delaying a final decision on Ward Valley.

Babbitt's decision will help protect the Colorado River from nuclear power plant wastes that will remain radioactive for thousands of years. Building an unlined radioactive waste dump just 20 miles from the Colorado River is like playing Russian roulette with a fully loaded revolver. It's stupid and deadly.

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