

The World's Most Selfish Industry

I know I'm alone in my opinion that the nature of large corporate business is selfish. There is one industry which is the epitome of greed - the nuclear industry with its short-term profit and extremely long-term negative outcomes.

Geologists believe there is only 10 years of "rich" uranium left in the world. This means that in ten years time it is expected to cost three times as much to make the material usable for electricity production. The cost of this electricity would then be higher than the cleaner alternatives.

Uranium mines are not known for having a high safety record and there is information about mine spills in Australia easily obtainable on the internet. High clusters of leukaemia are also now being reported around both mines and reactors.

Then we come to the waste. I was told recently that a well known Isan, who now works for the industry, stated that he would be happy to gain from the nuclear industry and let his grandchildren deal with the waste problem. A very selfish point of view that allows the planet to be plundered without once stopping to think of future generations. The fact is nuclear reactor waste has a half life of 250,000 years.

Wait; let me clear this up to save argument. 1% of reactor waste has a half life of 250,000 years. This figure can be easily found on the US Nuclear Regulatory Agency website. They go on to note however that the other 99% cannot be separated from the 1% - you still have to store 100%.

There is not one single long term storage facility in the world today. All reactor waste is stored on-site in cooling ponds or special containment units which the English have now said are breaking down. The US Government has started construction of a waste storage facility but are presently taking funding away from the project and putting that money into "unilateral" agreements. In international terms a unilateral agreement is when you talk another country into taking responsibility for something.

It isn't just chance then that our own government has done studies into nuclear power and given it the go-ahead. By becoming a nuclear energy user ourselves we open-up the possibility of waste dumps on our soil as we ourselves will need them. Australia is one of the most stable landmasses on earth so we would make a great waste dump.

Who is going to pay for the storage? Well, we will in time. For now we make money mining and everyone else uses the energy. They however don't want to store the waste and have for years pushed for us to take it back. So when one of the planned waste sites comes about we may well contract to take the waste and make short term gain. Do you think however the American, French or English to mention a few countries seeking long term storage options, will pay us for the next 45,000 years let alone 250,000 years to store the material they benefited from?

I have a word limit so I provide one final fact about nuclear energy which I think should be the reason we end all mining operations.

In Iraq, the Americans have used reactor waste to harden bomb casings. The radioactive fall-out and shrapnel has polluted the water table, the Iraqi population and allied soldiers. Returned American soldiers are starting to show signs of radiation sickness and suffering from toxic semen. Semen toxicity causes chemical burns on skin and increasing the cases of ovarian cancers in the returned soldier's wives. This was all done using 'conventional' weapons which the Americas label 'dirty bombs' when they are talking about terrorists using them.

If we are ever given a choice please vote "NO" to anything nuclear. The world isn't ours; it belongs to all generations.

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