

Triassic Park, Radioactive Waste & More

NMED and Gandy-Marley, Inc. (GMI) the owners of Triassic Park, consistently denied that GMI had any interest in bringing radioactive waste to Triassic Park throughout the original permitting process. However, Steve Pullen, Triassic Park's project manager, did explain at one point how there was no money in a purely hazardous waste dump—especially with another one right over the border in Texas (WCS). Dave Cobrain, the current project manager, stated that this is still the case.

Dale Gandy testified under oath that he had "no intention of applying to take mixed or radioactive waste. Steve Pullen claimed during testimony that NMED had never received indications from GMI of interest for receiving radioactive waste. Meanwhile, Steve Pullen and others at NMED had discussed this very thing with GMI as described in a memo of February 4, 1999. There was also a checklist where radioactive materials were also indicated as possible acceptable wastes.

This "radioactive" memo was hidden in NMED's "confidential file" until after the hearing was over so we were never able to cross examine either man about this. Acknowledging that this was improper, the memo was moved to the public Record by the hearing officer.

The strange tale of this memo is described more fully in our letter to EPA of 11-20-07, amending the Title VI Complaint. In that letter we describe how the memo was *not* in the public Record when we went looking for it and almost all copies of it attached to comments and the comments themselves were also missing from the file. There may, in fact, have been many more memos like this. Dave McCoy, who talks about public participation and discrimination problems his group Citizen Action experiences today with NMED, describes in his interview how they found hundreds of pages of Triassic Park documents in this secret file. NMED seemed **really** not to want any copies of the "radioactive memo" to survive. However, it is now in the record where it belongs. Nevertheless, ***it is the hiding of this memo in the past which makes it critical to see an index of items in the confidential file today, to make sure that nothing is filed there inappropriately.***

And GMI has clearly, all along, had a desire to bring radioactive materials to the site. At the beginning, it was discussions with NMED about low level waste as described in the memo. In 2003, in Deb Petrone's notes on a meeting about bringing pit production to Carlsbad, Triassic Park is suggested as a site to receive waste from that project by one of the presenters. In 2007 GMI applied to be a site that would receive high level waste (fuel rods) and reprocess them on site, creating more high level waste. In 2014 and again today, there is a lot of talk about bringing high level waste (spent fuel rods from reactors) to the "nuclear corridor" in southeastern New Mexico. Businesspeople in west Texas and SE New Mexico are constantly trying to figure a way to do this. The Triassic Park permit is up for renewal and perhaps this storage will end up at TP eventually, instead of in Lea County or West Texas.

It has been obvious all along that there is way more money in mixed or radioactive waste disposal than in purely hazardous waste. And the history of New Mexico hazardous waste is intimately mixed with radioactive materials. Huge areas of the state are already contaminated with both. Triassic Park can receive waste from out of state and from other countries. We don't need another dump that could turn into a magnet for mixed waste from around the country and around the world.