

that without some type of interim storage, then called away-from-reactor storage, that nuclear reactors around America would have to close down. In fact, their prediction was by 1983, 13 years ago. Well, the Congress wisely rejected the overture by the nuclear power industry more than a decade ago, and not a single reactor has closed because of the absence of storage for the spent nuclear fuel rods.

It is, in my judgment, a wiser policy and a more sensible policy that we make a determination only after we have a judgment as to the location of a permanent repository. That is what the language currently says, Mr. President, that there will be no decision to force a State or any jurisdiction to accept an interim storage until after the permanent repository program has made its own judgment. That, Mr. President, has not yet been done.

This sensible approach, accepted by those who have independent judgment and are members of the scientific community, endorsed by this administration and by many others, does not satisfy the nuclear power industry. They are furious that their bluff has been called, that its scare tactics over the years have been sufficiently transparent, that most have been able to see through them, and they have been frustrated in their goal of establishing an interim storage facility.

The risk that would be created by caving in to these special interest demands are substantial. In addition to creating overwhelming risk for those of us in Nevada, particularly because of its geographical proximity to the metropolitan area of Las Vegas, which is now home to 1 million people, this legislation would result in over 16,000 shipments of dangerous high-level nuclear waste to 43 States.

Mr. President, I apologize to my colleagues and staff who are watching this issue and I apologize to America that we do not have the resources to have full-page ads in major newspapers across America and all of the various bulletins and pieces of literature issued covering and commenting on the operation of the Congress. I see the very able and distinguished Senator from Kansas, and I assure her I will not be long in my comments. I take the occasion to make her aware, as I do the distinguished occupant of the chair, we are talking about 43 different States that will be affected, 16,000 shipments. Much of that is located in the Midwest. The State of Kansas, if I might cite for my colleague's edification since she is on the floor, is a major transshipment corridor. The red indicates highway. The blue indicates rail. We have one, two, three, four major shipment routes to the State of Kansas, exposing communities—we will talk more about this when this issue comes to the floor—exposing communities to a great deal of risk if indeed an accident happens.

We all hope that an accident does not happen. But most pencils in America are still made with an eraser. Mistakes

occur—human error. We know that. Whether it is Three-Mile Island, Chernobyl, or whatever the nuclear disasters have been in recent years, these are human failures, mistakes, neglect, all of those things, and they are not likely to change as a result of anything that we have done or are likely to do on the floor of the Senate.

I know that the chairman of the Energy Committee spoke yesterday at some length about that. I can understand why he does not share the concerns. Alaska is not a transshipment corridor, so that none of his constituents would be exposed to the risk, as 43 States and some 50 million of us that live along one of these transportation routes might be affected.

I might say—and I believe the occupant of the chair served at the municipal level of government—there is no assurance in this legislation that any financial assistance is provided to communities who are placed at risk. None. No assurance whatsoever. So these communities exposed to this risk will have to bear that responsibility on their own.

Let me just say that for some of us—and the occupant of the chair and I are from two States that have no nuclear reactors at all; yet, we will bear the burden of those transshipments—all unnecessary, all unnecessary because our States will be affected. In the great State of Oklahoma, there are at least three rail shipment routes that will pass through that great State. I can cite State after State, and I will have occasion to do so later.

The chairman of the Energy Committee, in addressing this yesterday, tended to dismiss any concerns about safety. "Nothing to worry about. This is all under control." Mr. President, I have said many times on the floor that I was in the eighth grade in early 1951 when the first nuclear atmospheric test was conducted at Frenchman Flats in Nevada, about 60 to 70 miles from my hometown of Las Vegas. We were assured at the time, "There are no risks. There is nothing to worry about. The scientific community has this under control." Indeed, people were invited to go up to observe this great scientific phenomenon. Benches were established so you could go up, if you were part of the press corps. Those of us who were in school, as part of science programs, were invited to rise early in the morning and see the great flash from the nuclear detonation, see the cloud, and wait for the seismic shock to hit us, and calculate with some precision how far from ground zero we were from the place where the shot took place. Community reaction was overwhelming. Stores, retail establishments, all embraced this new nuclear phenomenon.

Well, it is now 45 years later. Nobody buys that argument anymore. No scientist worthy of his or her degree would ever suggest with absolute certainty that we can detonate a nuclear blast in a 70-mile range of a major community. Nobody will assert that.

Do you know what the consequences of that trust us is? Today, every Member of this Congress, every taxpayer in America is paying for those poor, innocent victims downwind of where those atmospheric shots occurred, who suffer from cancer and other genetic effects as a result of those experiments. Trust us, you need not worry. We are talking about something that is lethal. And those of us who would bear the burden of this do not have the same sense of safety and assurance that the chairman of the Energy Committee has.

Mr. President, I know that this debate has been framed largely as a result of the special interests of the nuclear power lobby. Many of my colleagues, I am sure, have not heard from their constituents. Today, I take the opportunity to acquaint Americans and my colleagues and staff, who are watching our discussion, that this is not just a Nevada issue. Obviously, we feel powerfully aggrieved at this outrageous conduct that suggests that not only are we to be studied for a permanent repository, but an interim facility will be placed there as well.

My point is that ours is a lonely voice, a small State of 1.6 million people and 4 Members of Congress. We cannot match the nuclear power industries' finances, the phalanx of lobbyists that they have from one end of Capitol Hill to the other. But there is much at risk. It is not just Nevada; it is 43 States, 50 million people. I urge my colleagues to get engaged in this debate and understand what is at risk.

I thank the Chair and the Senator from Kansas for allowing me to extend my remarks.

I yield the floor.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, a lot of folks don't have the slightest idea about the enormity of the Federal debt. Ever so often, I ask groups of friends, how many millions of dollars are there in a trillion? They think about it, voice some estimates, most of them wrong.

One thing they do know is that it was the U.S. Congress that ran up the enormous Federal debt that is now over \$5 trillion.

To be exact, as of the close of business yesterday, May 8, 1996, the total Federal debt—down to the penny—stood at \$5,094,597,203,341.08. Another sad statistic is that on a per capita basis, every man, woman, and child in America owes \$19,238.98.

So, Mr. President, how many million are there in a trillion? There are a million million in a trillion, which means that the Federal Government owes more than \$5 million million.

Sort of boggles the mind, doesn't it?

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.