



The mission of DRC is to promote sustainable use of natural resources, and family owned and operated agriculture, by building enduring, democratic local groups that empower people to influence decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities.

DAKOTA RESOURCE COUNCIL STATEMENT ON ND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH VOTE TO RAISE LEVELS OF ACCEPTABLE RADIOACTIVE WASTE TO TEN TIMES CURRENT LEVELS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bismarck, ND - - Following a rushed North Dakota Department of Health State Health Council meeting Tuesday morning in Bismarck, Dakota Resource Council (DRC) released the following statement regarding the council's vote to raise levels of harmful radioactive waste ten-fold.

Reacting to the news at her home in Belfield, DRC Chair Linda Weiss said, "It is unfortunate that the North Dakota Department of Health chose to make this decision, dramatically changing the amount of radioactive waste in North Dakota. Time will tell whether this was the right choice for the future of North Dakota or the right choice, right now, for North Dakota's oil industry. While 50 picocuries per gram is judged by some oil industry experts to be a safe amount, the landfills that are already being permitted and built, like the one near me in Belfield, are designed to be large-scale industrial waste dumps accepting up to 500 tons of waste per day, seven days a week. This precedent will forever change the landscape of western North Dakota."

Less than one month ago, a department spokesperson said the department would not move on the new radiation rules until next year. Today's decision by the department came with only a 3-day notice. There is a pattern of a lack of concern for the public. During the 2015 Legislative Session, the department tried to avoid scrutiny of their proposed changes to radioactive waste laws by asking to be allowed to "fill in the blanks."

DRC members Darrell Dorgan (Bismarck) and Marie Hoff (Bismarck) were at the hearing and expressed dismay not only at the decision, but how the notices for the meeting were given less than a week before.

Hoff said, "While the Health Council may not have violated reporting requirements for today's meeting, they violated the public's trust by deliberately keeping this meeting under the radar. If this was a sound and safe decision for future North Dakotans, why not give proper notice and conduct themselves with the utmost transparency? I am very concerned that the agency charged with protecting the health and safety of the people are maneuvering with such secrecy. It makes one wonder what else is being hidden."

Dorgan said, "We are no longer on the edge of ecological disaster. We've heard the drums for months now, and our state leaders just made certain North Dakota will be a Superfund site within the next five years. The Health Department's duty is to protect the health and welfare of our people. Instead, this decision benefits oil companies who complain that shipping the waste out of state is too expensive. Tons of radioactive waste have already been dumped, illegally. Now it's legal. Who will help future generations of taxpayers who are going to be charged with cleaning up this new Superfund site, formerly known as North Dakota."

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