

Attachment 4: Wes McKinley Language – HB10-1127

THE STATE OF COLORADO HAS DETERMINED THAT MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SHOULD BE INFORMED OF THE FOLLOWING FACTS WHEN DECIDING WHETHER TO ENTER ROCKY FLATS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE:

ROCKY FLATS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WAS A NUCLEAR WEAPONS MANUFACTURING PLANT FROM 1950-1991. DURING THAT TIME, THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE) AND ITS CONTRACTORS BURIED, BURNED, AND SPRAYED PLUTONIUM AND OTHER RADIOACTIVE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ON-SITE AT ROCKY FLATS. SOME OF THESE ACTIONS WERE LEGAL, OTHERS ILLEGAL.

SINCE 1992, THE DOE HAS UNDERTAKEN CLEANUP OF THE SITE. THE DOE, THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA), AND THE STATE OF COLORADO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT, AFTER THE CLEANUP IS COMPLETE, DETECTABLE LEVELS OF PLUTONIUM AND OTHER RADIOACTIVE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS WILL REMAIN IN THE SURFACE AND SUBSURFACE SOILS AND IN THE GROUNDWATER, AND MAY BE PRESENT IN DUST THAT BECOMES AIRBORNE AT THE SITE. PERSONS ACCESSING ROCKY FLATS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE MAY BECOME EXPOSED TO RADIOACTIVE AND OTHER HAZARDOUS MATERIALS THROUGH DUST IN THE AIR OR THROUGH CONTACT WITH THE SOILS. THE RADIOACTIVE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ARE INVISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE AND MAY BE CARRIED HOME IN DIRT ON SHOES AND BELONGINGS. PLUTONIUM REMAINS RADIOACTIVE FOR TENS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS, AND IT CAN BE HARMFUL IN VERY SMALL AMOUNTS IF INHALED, INGESTED, OR OTHERWISE TAKEN INTO THE BODY, SUCH AS THROUGH AN OPEN WOUND.

THERE IS CONTROVERSY WITHIN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY CONCERNING ACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF RISK FROM SUCH EXPOSURE AND THE METHODS OF CALCULATING THAT RISK, AND THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SCIENTIFIC UNCERTAINTY ASSOCIATED WITH THESE ISSUES.

ACCORDING TO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARD-SETTING BODIES, THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF HUMAN EXPOSURE TO PLUTONIUM OR OTHER MATERIALS THAT PRODUCE IONIZING RADIATION. CANCER AND GENETIC DEFECTS ARE KNOWN EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO LOW LEVELS OF IONIZING RADIATION. CHILDREN AND THE ALREADY INFIRM ARE THE MOST AT RISK FROM LOW LEVELS OF IONIZING RADIATION.

THE EPA AND THE STATE OF COLORADO, USING MATHEMATICAL MODELING, HAVE DETERMINED THAT CLEANUP OF WHAT IS NOW THE ROCKY FLATS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE HAS MADE THE REFUGE SAFE FOR VISITORS AND WILDLIFE REFUGE WORKERS. THESE AGENCIES HAVE ALSO DETERMINED THAT THE CLEANUP COMPLIES WITH THE WRITTEN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EPA, THE DOE, AND THE STATE.

IN LIGHT OF THE SCIENTIFIC UNCERTAINTIES AND THE CONTROVERSIES ABOUT RISK, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CONSIDERING A VISIT TO ROCKY FLATS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SHOULD DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES WHETHER THE RISKS ARE ACCEPTABLE TO THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES.