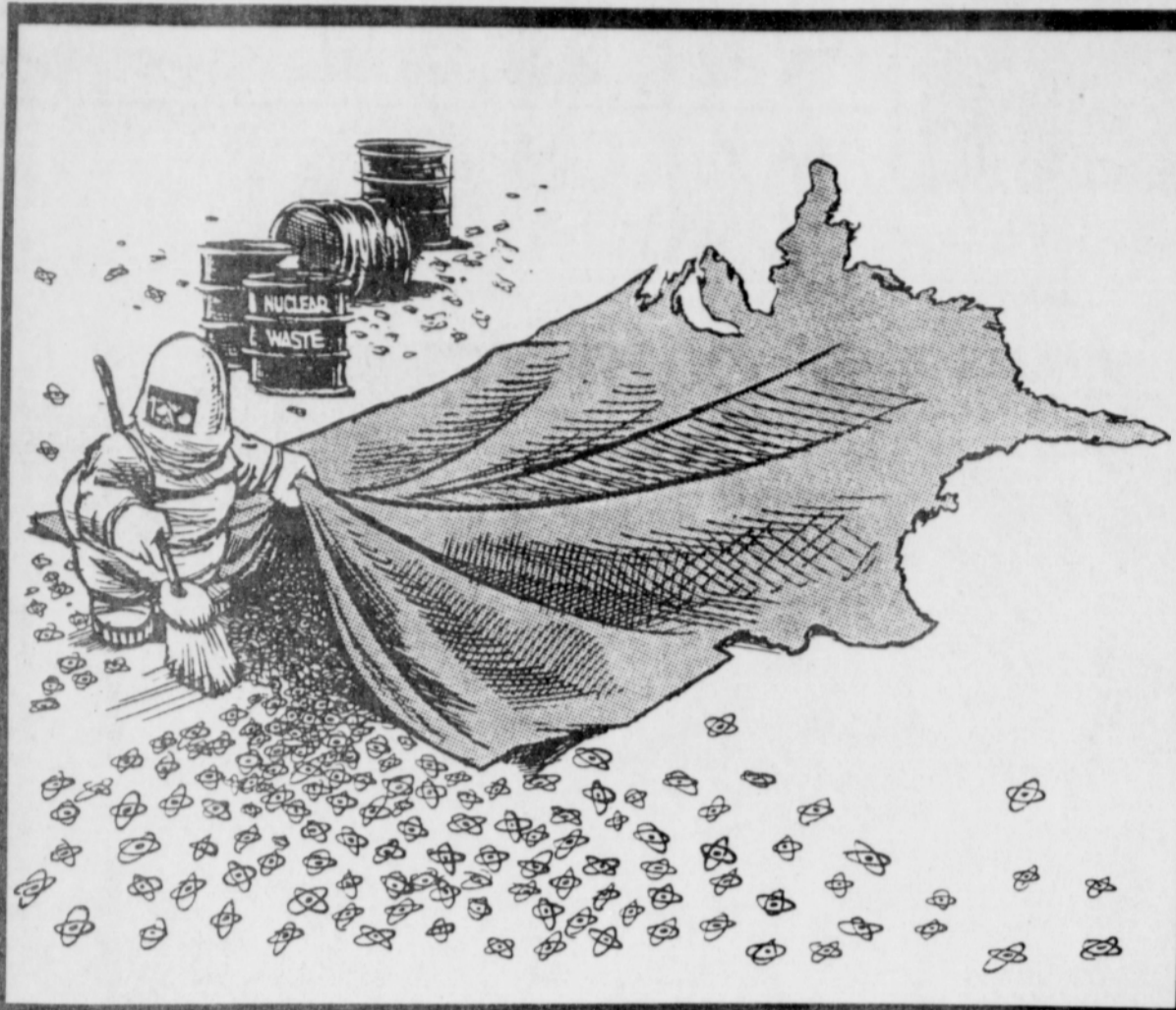


YOU'LL NEVER KNOW UNTIL

YOU START TO GLOW

BY BARBARA HARRAH



MORIN

EXAMPLES OF RADIOACTIVE CONSUMER PRODUCTS CURRENTLY ON THE MARKET

PRODUCT	RADIOACTIVE ELEMENT(S)
smoke detectors	Americium-241, Plutonium-238, Radium-226
luminescent faces on watches, aircraft instruments, compasses, instrument dials and markers, thermostat dials and pointers, automobile lock illuminators, automobile shift quadrants, bell pushes, fishing lights, some exit signs	Tritium (radioactive Hydrogen-3), Promethium-147, Krypton-85
antistatic devices	Polonium-210, Americium-241, Radium-226
photography brushes, lightning rods, precision balances	
optical lenses	Uranium and Thorium
dental porcelains	Uranium and Cerium
some ceramics and glassware	Uranium and Thorium
some electrical and electronic devices, voltage discharge tubes, fluorescent lamp starters, gas-discharge lamps, high voltage protectors, low voltage fuses	Tritium, Cesium-137, Radium-226, Nickel-63, Cobalt-60, Krypton-85, Promethium-147

"Radiation and Human Health" by Dr. John W. Gofman, Sierra Club Books, October 1981, pages 578-583. See also: UNSCEAR (United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation) 1977. Sources and Effects of Ionizing Radiation. Report to the General Assembly, with annexes. United Nations, N. Y.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the Environmental Protection Agency are attempting to deregulate radioactive waste which they say is "below regulatory concern." The radioactive waste which falls into this category will henceforth be treated as non-radioactive waste and deposited in regular dumps or recycled. The reason the NRC is creating an arbitrary range of radiation exposure below which no regulation will be necessary is simply because the nuclear industry requested it, arguing that it will save the nuclear industry hundreds of millions of dollars.

What specifically will be deregulated will be decided by the NRC. But according to the Nuclear Information and Resource Service in Washington, D. C., among the waste the nuclear power industry suggests be disposed of in local landfills, incinerated or recycled in consumer products are: wastes from every nuclear power plant in the United States, radioactive consumer products, compacted and non-compacted radiation-contaminated solid wastes presently disposed as "radwaste," water treatment systems, sandblasting grit and other abrasive materials used to clean and decontaminate radioactively contaminated surfaces, low activity condensed tubes, and the list goes on.

According to the Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS), this once highly regulated waste will now show up in local landfills, sewage systems, incinerators, recycling centers, farmland via sludge spreading, and consumer products. Already the nuclear industry has managed to profitably dispose of some of its radioactive waste in consumer products. NIRS has made the chart on this page showing present products on the market and the radioactive elements in them.

The NRC will list what will be deregulated and at what levels of radiation. But according to NIRS, one of their early requests was to authorize radioactive waste products in frying pans and jewelry. In California recently radioactive material was permitted in the cleaning of certain topaz, so long as the gems were unsold for the thirty years needed until they were no longer radioactive. These gems, however, were sold, and women wearing them contracted cancers linked to this jewelry.

We should remind ourselves again: There is no safe level of radiation exposure, and every exposure increases the risk of cancer, birth defects and other abnormalities. If the proposed deregulation goes through, radiation exposure will increase dramatically for all of us. Background levels will rise, cleanup of contaminated nuclear weapons plants will not be completed, radiation will simply be labeled "BRC" (below regulatory concern) and be freely dispersed into every part of our lives. It will build up in community landfills, and the community will not be forewarned. Everyone will be exposed, without protective clothing, without even their knowledge — our garbage haulers, our jewelers, our dentists, and all of us who wear clothes, turn on lights, cook with frying pans.


What can we do? Contact your newspapers, local radio and television stations, elected officials and talk. Let people know that this is actually happening now and pass laws against it. For more information, contact the Safe Energy Council, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW LL215, Washington, D. C. 20036 (202 483-8491) and the Nuclear Information and Resource Service, 1425 16th Street, NW, Suite 601, Washington, D. C. 20036 (202 328-0002).

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