

**Testimony by Michael Ford, CHP  
Vice Chair of Texas Radiation Advisory Board  
House Environmental Committee Hearing  
Interim Studies - Lost and Stolen Radioactive Materials  
April 29, 2002**

TRAB has been working on issues with BRC and state agencies associated. These are interwoven issues. All are interrelated:  
security of radioactive materials  
drinking water and its security  
staffing at Bureau of Radiation Control  
low-level radioactive waste site

First and foremost, on the security of radioactive materials, the TRAB has issued an advisory. A dirty bomb is not the only way to use radioactive materials; not using a bomb is a more insidious way to harm people, but these details are not appropriate for discussion in this forum.

NORM in drinking water - EPA has promulgated rules. These rules will create waste from drinking water systems in the form of NORM (naturally occurring radioactive material). NORM will be removed from the water if the rule passes. There is no place in the State of Texas for this waste. The waste will grow in the community water systems. The money needed to comply with that new law will be taken away from the funds that could be used for security features that need to be put in place.

Staffing at BRC - TRAB is concerned about the ability of BRC in the future to respond to incidents as they come up. Specifically, with retirements and inability to complete with industry in salaries, the BRC faces difficulties in terms of attracting and retaining quality people. TRAB is concerned about this and you should be concerned, too, about the BRC's long term capabilities. They have a very good staff of high quality people and we hope to keep them. A great deal of attention needs to be placed on this issue.

Waste issue - A low-level radioactive waste site in Texas has been a contentious issue. Last session, the concept of assured isolation appeared and I hope this is still on the plate to discuss this session. It provides many benefits including enhanced monitoring. Although it is not in the NRC regulations specifically, they are willing to talk about it. It is beneficial for Texas to look at assured isolation. There are some similarities to be considered in talking about the other waste sites where we send Texas waste. Nothing prevents them from doing as Barnwell has done in reducing amounts they will take. Barnwell, as others have said, is phasing out waste acceptance and will not take waste as of 2008. The declining volumes are charge not per cubic foot but as a cost capture. Therefore as the volume is reduced, the cost escalates. It will be increasingly difficult and expensive to send waste there.

The Sierra Club has a report that will be talked about. They have done a good job ferreting out the numbers of waste generators and amounts. With due respect to their right to their opinion, the TRAB recommends that Texas needs a low-level radioactive waste or assured isolation site.

(A question from Chairman Chisum was answered to clarify there was not radioactive material contamination at Pantex and that a chemical contamination may have appeared due to a sampling problem. Remediation continues.)

