

Title: **Put a lid on nuclear dumping**
 Author:
 Size: 74.09 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



Editorial

Put a lid on nuclear dumping

When it comes to nuclear waste, it's perfectly all right to be a NIMBY in South Carolina. Indeed, people trying to stop additional radioactive waste from being dumped in Barnwell County should wear the label proudly.

South Carolina waged a battle for more than three decades before succeeding in limiting waste stored at the dump. Before 2008, waste came from all over the country. Then South Carolina finally gained permission to accept only waste from South Carolina, Connecticut and New Jersey.

This is not an area to encourage growth, whatever the monetary "rewards." Any supposed benefit would be offset by potential long-term hazards.

Already EnergySolutions, the Utah-based company that operates the Barnwell dump, is under a court order to address radiation leaking into drinking water supplies for Hilton Head.

Gov. Nikki Haley, who typically leans toward business growth, has wisely

taken the other side in this issue and is standing in opposition to the plan and in favor of the environment.

Mrs. Haley said EnergySolutions has been contacting lawmakers and her staff to pitch the idea of sending low-level radioactive waste to Utah and accepting hotter waste here instead.

And they think this would be somehow appealing?

Just ask the people of Barnwell County who live near Mary's Branch Creek what they think of that idea. The area is off limits to fishing, hunting, swimming and irrigation because of high levels of tritium that has leaked from the landfill. But there's no stopping the creek from feeding into the Savannah River.

No bill has yet been introduced this year to consider changes in the Barnwell protocol, but Sen. Brad Hutto, D-Orangeburg, left that door open by saying he thinks questions regarding the dump should be reviewed "from time to time."

Early on, the 1971-built dump buried

the equivalent of more than 40 tractor-trailers full of radioactive trash from 39 states on the site. Protective clothing, tools, cleaning rags, lab equipment and equipment used to treat cancer patients were stored in steel containers, put in concrete vaults and buried in trenches.

Even if the plan being pitched does not expand the storage site in Barnwell, it increases the number of states that are allowed to send waste to Barnwell, and it intensifies the toxic nature of the waste.

South Carolina legislators and the governor should continue to hold the line on dumping at Barnwell. The hard-fought agreement for the three-state compact stopped the flood of waste to South Carolina while maintaining needed waste capacity for this state's hospitals.

It doesn't allow the waste site to maximize the return on its operation, but it has been of benefit to South Carolina. Barnwell shouldn't again become the nation's favored site for nuclear waste disposal.

Title: **Put a lid on nuclear dumping**

Author:

Size: 74.09 square inch

Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



AP PHOTO/VIRGINIA POSTIC

Waste is secured inside steel drums, encased in concrete vaults in a trench at EnergySolutions in Barnwell.

Title: Haley opposes reopening Barnwell
Author: By SAMMY FRETWELL sfretwell@thestate.com
Size: 70.37 square inch
Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



NUCLEAR WASTE DUMP

Haley opposes reopening Barnwell

'We don't want to sell our soul for jobs and money'

By SAMMY FRETWELL sfretwell@thestate.com

Gov. Nikki Haley said Thursday she opposes reopening the Barnwell County low-level nuclear waste dump because burying radioactive garbage from across the country isn't the kind of legacy South Carolina wants to continue.



Haley

While the landfill's operators say opening the dump to the nation would be good for the economy and create jobs, Haley said the 235-acre burial ground presents potential long-term problems for South Carolina. Pollution leaks were first de-

tected beneath the dump in 1978, seven years after it opened.

"We don't want to sell our soul for jobs and money," Haley said at a news conference. The governor said the state has other priorities it needs to work on and "taking in other states' nuclear waste is not one of them."

The governor has pushed a jobs agenda since her election in 2010 and has been quick to oppose environmental regulations she said could hurt the state's economy. But she said quality of life issues matter in balancing jobs with the environment.

SEE BARNWELL PAGE A8

BARNWELL

FROM PAGE A3

Haley's comments Thursday, the first she has made in the growing Barnwell debate, severely damaged chances that a bill to reopen the site would pass the Legislature this year, several lawmakers said. No legislation has been introduced but is expected to be filed this spring.

The governor's position also echoes that of the state's past two governors, Democrat Jim Hodges and

Republican Mark Sanford, who both opposed keeping the Barnwell dump open to the nation. Hodges engineered an agreement in 2000 that excluded use of the landfill to all states except for South Carolina, Connecticut and New Jersey. The landfill today is open to dispose of old nuclear reactor parts and other low-level radioactive trash, mostly from power plants in the three states. Sanford opposed efforts in

2007 to delay closing of the landfill to all other states. It has been open to only the three states since 2008.

Haley said her chief of staff was approached by representatives of Energy Solutions, a Utah corporation, about a month to six weeks ago about its plan. The company, the parent corporation of longtime Barnwell site operator Chem-Nuclear, also is making the rounds in the Legislature.

The company's plan is to

send some less radioactive waste now destined for Barnwell County to a site in Utah. In exchange, waste that is more radioactive would be brought to Barnwell County from states now barred from using the dump. The idea is to raise revenue. It is more expensive for nuclear power plants that generate atomic trash to dispose of low-level waste with higher levels of radioactivity.

But Haley said the idea isn't worth the risk. Leaks

Title: **Haleyopposes reopeningBarnwell**
 Author: By SAMMYFRETWELL sfretwell@thestate.com
 Size: 70.37 square inch
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564

from the landfill “are all the more reason why we don’t want to take a chance of increasing that hazard,” Haley said.

“I’m not willing to go and take in nuclear waste that our kids and grandkids are going to have to deal with,” she said. “We don’t want to go and see more of what we think could be hazardous coming to South Carolina in a time when we are doing so well.”

Democratic Sen. Brad Hutto, the chief proponent of reopening Barnwell, contends the site will be managed for decades to protect the environment from the most radioactive kind of waste. He emphasized that the plan doesn’t include bringing in more waste or expanding the site. The dump today is about 87 percent full.

Since the site already is open to South Carolina, Connecticut and New Jersey, allowing other states to use it should be considered to raise revenues, said Hutto, an Orangeburg resident whose Senate district in-

cludes the dump.

“It’s there, we are monitoring it for the long term, it’s going to continue to operate, it’s going to continue until it fills up,” Hutto said. “Nothing about what (the governor) is saying is going to affect the children of South Carolina. She’s certainly entitled to her opinion. It just seems to me that everybody is kind of getting the cart before the horse. We haven’t even put the proposal out there yet.”

Energy Solutions spokesman Mark Walker said the company was “disappointed in the governor’s comments,” but would continue to work with the state to “ensure the long-term viability” of the landfill.

Barnwell County’s unlined dump has leaked radioactive tritium into groundwater and into a tributary of the Savannah River, a drinking water source for Hilton Head Island and other communities downstream. The 44-year-old dump’s operators say it is safe, but triti-

um continues to show up at elevated levels in groundwater 37 years after leaks were first detected in the wetlands-filled area of western South Carolina. Last year, the S.C. Court of Appeals ordered the landfill’s operator to develop a plan to limit radioactive pollution.

The atomic waste dump generates fewer than 100 jobs. It has been a fixture in the community of Snelling since opening in 1971.

At its peak, the landfill brought in more than 2 million cubic feet of atomic garbage, or about three-fourths of the nation’s low-level waste. Since it closed to the nation in 2008, the site is burying about 3,600 cubic feet of waste from the three states that still use it, according to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control. Today, much of the nation’s low-level waste goes to landfills in arid parts of Texas and Utah.

Low-level nuclear waste is a type of radioactive garbage that isn’t as dangerous as high-level waste, the

most deadly form of atomic garbage. But low-level waste still can be hazardous, particularly certain classes that include resins and nuclear reactor parts containing higher amounts of radioactivity.

Pickens Republican Rep. David Hiott, who is chairman of the House committee that reviews most environmental bills, and Sen. Harvey Peeler, one of the upper chamber’s ranking members, said the bill has an uphill climb now that the governor has said she’s against reopening the site.

“For the governor to come out this strong, this early like that, should tell you” its chances of passing are poor, said Republican Peeler, a Haley ally from Gaffney.

Columbia Democratic Sen. Darrell Jackson, a critic of Haley’s, said he doubts there would be enough votes in the Senate to override any veto she might cast if a bill made it through the Legislature.

“I’m glad to see that she said that,” Jackson said. “It’s the right thing.”

Title: WalkerbackinS.C. asaGOPfront-runner

Author: ByANDREW SHAIN ashain@thestate.com

Size: 84.47 square inch

Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



2016 PRESIDENTIAL RACE

Walker back in S.C. as a GOP front-runner

Presidential hopeful
and friend of Gov.
Haley on a two-day
blitz of the state

By ANDREW SHAIN
ashain@thestate.com

Scott Walker is not as familiar to South Carolinians as other 2016 Republican presidential hopefuls. But the Wisconsin governor's newness could prove to be part of his appeal.

"He's fresh," retired accountant Bruce Thomas said before heading into Walker's speech Thursday in Columbia. "He's not part of the Washington establishment. ... I'm not going to waste my vote this time."

Walker, who launched a two-day blitz of the state Thursday, is making the most of his first S.C. visit since 2013. Walker is hitting all four of the state's major television markets: Columbia, Greenville, Charleston and Rock Hill, part of the Charlotte market.

On Thursday, Walker attracted a group of more than 125 who paid \$50 to \$1,000 each to eat lunch at a Columbia hotel and hear Walker,

who is vying for top billing among GOP White House hopefuls with former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

"I would like to see an executive who has managed things like a state" in the Oval Office, said Columbia developer Don Tomlin.

Tomlin said he is undecided but wanted to take stock of Walker. Neither he nor Thomas back a third Bush in the White House.

Thomas blames Jeb Bush's brother, former President George W. Bush, for the Great Recession, saying he did not pay attention to the economy.

Tomlin cites fatigue with the Bush family, which already includes two presidents. "The Republican Party needs a new name at this point."

Walker has not formally announced his White House bid. But his half-hour talk at an S.C. Republican Party fundraiser Thursday sounded a lot

like the speeches he could give before the February 2016 S.C. primary, the first in the South and one of the earliest in the primary cycle.

The governor, who last fall won a second term, touted his successes in Wisconsin, saying he has lowered taxes and unemployment, eliminated the state's budget deficit and passed voter ID and right-to-work laws. "I'm proud to say that because of our reforms, my state is better for my children and their generation."

Walker, the son of a Baptist minister, received ovations when he spoke about foreign policy, an issue considered his biggest weakness as a presidential candidate.

"It bothers me ... that we've got a president ... who draws a line in the sand and allows people to step over it," Walker said.

"We need a leader who will

SEE WALKER PAGE A9

THESTATE.COM: Watch excerpts from Scott Walker's Columbia speech

Title: **WalkerbackinS.C. asaGOPfront-runner**
 Author: ByANDREWSHAIN ashain@thestate.com
 Size: 84.47 square inch
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564

WALKER

FROM PAGE A3

look the American people in the eye and say we will do whatever it takes to make sure radical Islamic terrorism does not wash up on American soil. I'd rather take the fight to them."

After his speech, Walker met privately with Gov. Nikki Haley and S.C. GOP lawmakers.

Haley and Walker, a pair of 40-something governors elected in 2010, have developed a friendship. She campaigned for Walker in Wisconsin in his 2012 recall election, and he attended her 2013 re-election announcement in Greenville.

"God bless him, he's had three elections in four years," Haley said, when asked Thursday about Walker. "He's the ultimate

candidate."

Haley toured a Columbia-area domestic violence safe house Tuesday with Bush.

Haley has said she will not endorse a Republican presidential candidate until closer to the February 2016 primary. She endorsed former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney in 2012, who lost the S.C. GOP primary but won his party's nomination.



GERRY MELENDEZ/GMELENDEZ@THESTATE.COM

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker speaks Thursday during a luncheon at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Columbia. The luncheon attracted a group of more than 125 who paid \$50 to \$1,000 each.

Title: **House budget chief floats income tax cut to pair with roads plan**
 Author: By CASSIE COPE ccope@thestate.com
 Size: 52.85 square inch
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



House budget chief floats income tax cut to pair with roads plan

By CASSIE COPE
ccope@thestate.com

House Ways and Means chairman Brian White filed a bill Thursday to cut income taxes for the average S.C. taxpayer by \$48 a year.

The move, designed to appeal to Gov. Nikki Haley, comes as S.C. House members plan next week to start debating competing road repair plans, including one pushed by Haley.

But the proposed income tax cut might not be enough for Haley, who has said she wants to see a

“massive” cut in exchange for raising gas taxes to pay for road repairs.

House members defended White’s smaller tax cut proposal as affordable.

White, R-Anderson, said that if his tax cut proposal can be married with a House committee’s roads bill, it could help pass the roads bill, sponsored by state Rep. Gary Simrill, R-York.

White’s proposal would adjust the state’s tax brack-

ets over two years, resulting in a \$51 million income tax cut for taxpayers.

White’s proposal would apply the state’s top-end 7 percent income tax on taxable income of more than \$16,350 a year, once phased in. Now, the 7 percent tax rate kicks in at \$14,700.

The average taxpayer would get a \$48 tax break under White’s proposal.

Haley has proposed cutting the state’s 7 percent

tax rate by 2 percentage points. In exchange, she proposed a

10-cent-a-gallon increase to the state’s gas tax, adding she would veto any tax hike that was not offset by a “massive” tax cut.

Critics say they are concerned about the impact of Haley’s tax cut proposal.

Haley says growth in the state’s economy will offset

SEE **TAX CUT PAGE A9**

TAX CUT

FROM PAGE **A3**

the revenue lost by the state. But critics say her plan would cut the state’s general fund revenues by \$1.8 billion a year in 2025, forcing cuts to services, including education, public safety and mental health.

“There’s a way to go about doing (a tax cut) that you can ensure that you’re still going to be able to fund the state’s needs,” White said.

Simrill and White’s proposals both will be debated by separate House subcommittees next Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the state Senate is working on its own road repair proposals.

Sen. Ray Cleary, R-Georgetown, said he plans to put several proposals into one package to be considered by the Senate Finance Committee next week.

Cleary said those proposals include:

- Increasing the state gas tax by 12 cents a gallon over three years, and indexing that increase to inflation. The increase would be suspended if S.C.’s gas tax ever rose above a neighboring state’s gas tax.
- Increasing the fees on driver’s licenses, bought every 10 years, to \$50 from \$25.
- Levying an annual \$60 fee on hybrid vehicles and a \$120 fee on alternative-fuel vehicles.
- Increasing the state’s sales tax cap on

vehicles to \$600 from \$300; Simrill’s House proposal would increase the cap to \$500.

At a news conference Thursday, Haley said that Cleary’s plan includes “a whole lot of tax increases.”

“We will let everything fall to the wayside before we allow the people of South Carolina to see a tax increase,” she added.

Haley also wants the state Transportation Department reformed, giving the governor more control over the agency.

The Republican has said she could be OK with Simrill’s House proposal to have the governor appoint the Transportation Department’s eight-member commission, which would select a Transportation secretary. Seven of the commission’s eight members now are elected by legislative delegations.

Cleary said his roads plan also will include a similar restructuring proposal.

Reach Cope at (803) 771-8657.

CUTTING S.C. INCOME TAXES

House Ways and Means chairman Brian White, R-Anderson, filed a proposal Thursday to cut income taxes for S.C. taxpayers. But his proposed cuts

are far more modest than the “massive” tax cuts that Republican Gov. Nikki Haley has said she wants in exchange for increasing the state’s gas tax.

HALEY’S TAX CUT

- The average taxpayer would get a \$623 tax break.
- An estimated 1 million S.C. residents would get no break because they do not earn enough to pay income taxes. However, they would have to pay higher gas taxes.
- The wealthiest 379 S.C. taxpayers would save \$145,784 each in their income taxes.

WHITE’S TAX CUT

- The average taxpayer would get a \$48 tax break.
- An estimated 1 million S.C. residents would get no tax break because they do not earn enough to pay income taxes. However, they would have to pay the higher gas taxes.
- The wealthiest 379 S.C. taxpayers would save \$48 each on their income taxes.

SOURCE: S.C. Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office

Title: **DSS: Lawsuit over SC kids' basic needs should be dismissed**
 Author: By MEG KINNARD The Associated Press
 Size: 31.46 square inch
 Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



DSS: Lawsuit over SC kids' basic needs should be dismissed

By MEG KINNARD

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — State officials want dismissal of a lawsuit accusing South Carolina's child welfare agency of endangering children in its care, saying the case is an attempt to force the court system to get involved in the agency's funding.

"Plaintiffs' claims are nothing more than a veiled attempt at asking this Court to instruct the Governor and the Director how to manage the Department and to order the South Carolina General Assembly to allocate additional funds to the Department," attorneys for the Department of Social Services wrote in court papers filed this week.

Attorneys for director Susan Alford also said federal courts have no jurisdiction over the issues. The children mentioned in the suit, they noted, all have active family court cases, and it's there that complaints should be handled. In a separate filing, Gov. Nikki Haley says she should be dismissed from the case because she doesn't oversee DSS and only appoints its director.

Last year, two advocacy groups — Children's Rights

and the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center — sued DSS and Haley, saying the agency failed to provide 11 children with basic health care and the right kind of attention.

One 16-year-old girl has been through at least a dozen placements in about eight years, according to the lawsuit, and was told by a caseworker that she was in a group facility because the agency didn't have enough foster homes. Other children were reportedly denied necessary therapy for months, abused by caretakers and kept from siblings also in the system.

According to the lawsuit, South Carolina's caseloads can be two or three times those of national and state standards, with some caseworkers having 60 or 70 children at a time.

The lawsuit echoed findings in an October Legislative Audit Council report, which said DSS relied heavily on unreliable data, failed to request extra money and ignored growing problems. The audit also said the agency didn't do enough to ensure children are placed in

safe homes.

The audit also found DSS failed to properly investigate abuse allegations and child deaths. DSS said last fall it was aware of problems and welcomed any help it can get.

Alford was easily confirmed earlier this year to lead the agency. Amid bipartisan calls for her ousting, former director Lillian Koller resigned last year, insisting for years she didn't need additional money or manpower.

In this year's budget request, the agency had sought for its child-welfare division money for 277 additional employees — 73 percent of them caseworkers and supervisors. It also requested money for 35 additional vulnerable adult caseworkers and 22 more people to inspect daycare providers.

The House's budget proposal, approved last week, pays for less than half the requested additional child-welfare workers. The House plan instead funds 120 caseworkers total, as well as the 22 daycare inspectors. But the proposal doubles employees' pay raises.

Title: **DSS wants suit on kids' needs tossed**
 Author: BY MEG KINNARD Associated Press
 Size: 23.09 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



DSS wants suit on kids' needs tossed

BY MEG KINNARD
Associated Press

COLUMBIA — State officials want dismissal of a lawsuit accusing South Carolina's child welfare agency of endangering children in its care, saying the case is an attempt to force the court system to get involved in the agency's funding.

"Plaintiffs' claims are nothing more than a veiled attempt at asking this Court to instruct the Governor and the Director how to manage the Department and to order the South Carolina General Assembly to allocate additional funds to the Department," attorneys for the Department of Social Services wrote in court papers filed this week.

Attorneys for director Susan Alford also said federal courts have no jurisdiction over the issues. The children mentioned in the suit, they noted, all have active family court cases, and it's there that complaints should be handled. In a separate filing, Gov. Nikki Haley says she should be dismissed from the case because she doesn't oversee DSS and only appoints its director.

Last year, two advocacy groups — Children's Rights and the South Carolina Applesseed Legal Justice Center — sued DSS and Haley, saying the agency failed to provide 11 children with basic health care

and the right kind of attention.

One 16-year-old girl has been through at least a dozen placements in about eight years, according to the lawsuit, and was told by a caseworker that she was in a group facility because the agency didn't have enough foster homes. Other children were reportedly denied necessary therapy for months, abused by caretakers and kept from siblings also in the system.

According to the lawsuit, South Carolina's caseloads can be two or three times those of national and state standards, with some caseworkers having 60 or 70 children at a time.

The lawsuit echoed findings in an October Legislative Audit Council report, which said DSS relied heavily on unreliable data, failed to request extra money and ignored growing problems. The audit also said the agency didn't do enough to ensure children are placed in safe homes.

The audit also found DSS failed to properly investigate abuse allegations and child deaths. DSS said last fall it was aware of problems and welcomed any help it can get.

Alford was easily confirmed earlier this year to lead the agency. Amid bipartisan calls for her ousting, former director Lillian Koller resigned last year, insisting for years she didn't need additional money or manpower.



Title: **Walker avoids union talk**
 Author: BY SCHUYLER KROPF skropf@postandcourier.com
 Size: 145.54 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289

Walker avoids union talk

Wis. governor, presidential hopeful quiet on Boeing issue at fundraiser

BY SCHUYLER KROPF

skropf@postandcourier.com

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker avoided openly bashing unions during his first appearance in Charleston as a White House hopeful, commenting on the Air Force C-17 cargo planes he saw while flying in rather than the labor dispute at Boeing's assembly plant.

"For me, one of the most important parts of my job as a governor is I'm commander-in-chief" of Wisconsin's Air and Army National Guard, he told 300 people at a Republican Party fundraiser

at the Francis Marion Hotel while praising military veterans.

During his 25-minute address, Walker lightly referenced the issue that has made him a national

lightning rod: weakening unions in the Dairy State. He said the word "union" only twice as he mentioned

limiting teacher tenure and signing legislation that made Wisconsin the 25th "right-to-work" state.

Walker, considered a top-tier competitor in the 2016 Republi-

can field, used most of his talk to make an opening pitch to Low-country Republicans. He covered his accomplishments in Wisconsin

Please see **WALKER**, Page A6

* Palmetto Politics

For more political coverage, information on the Palmetto Politics app or to sign up for our newsletter, go to **palmetto politics.com**.

Walker avoids Boeing union issue at fundraiser

WALKER, from A1

throwing a few barbs at Democrats nationally, including Hillary Clinton and President Barack Obama.

"I think they believe the way you grow the economy is by growing Washington," he said to applause.

He also set out his foreign policy, calling for more open U.S. support for Israel and taking on international terrorism.

"We need a commander-in-chief in this country who will stand up and, once and for all, say that radical Islamic terrorism is a threat to us in the world and we need to act on it," he said.

Walker visited Charleston on the second day of a two-day swing through South Carolina, which holds an early primary next year. He spent Thursday in the Upstate and Columbia, where he was joined by Gov. Nikki Haley, a close

political ally. His last visit to the state was in August 2013 at her re-election kickoff.

Walker's Charleston visit did not go unnoticed by organized labor. A small group of about 20 protesters lined up outside the hotel during his talk, which comes as Boeing production workers at the North Charleston plant may soon decide whether they will be represented by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

"We stand here with our brothers and sisters across the country on this assault against unions," said Donna DeWitt, president emeritus of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations in South Carolina.

South Carolina has one of the lowest levels of union membership in the country and many believe the fight to unionize the Boeing plant is a long

shot.

Inside the hotel, Walker faced only a

friendly audience, which had paid at least \$50 a plate to attend.

"I think he's probably one of the best governors in the United States," said Brian Kelley, of Summerville, who said

Walker was well-positioned to use his skills in the White House.

But Kelley wasn't ready to commit. "I think there's an embarrassment of riches" of Republicans to pick from this year, he said.

Later in the evening, Walker was scheduled to speak to a National Rifle Association gathering in downtown Charleston that was closed to the media. During his afternoon talk, Walker noted that he signed two pieces of pro-Second Amendment legislation as governor: a concealed weapons bill and recognition of the castle doctrine.

Title: **Walker avoids union talk**
Author: BY SCHUYLER KROPF skropf@postandcourier.com
Size: 145.54 square inch
Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



GRACE BEAHM/STAFF

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker greets Diane Moreno of Bluffton at a fundraising luncheon Friday at the Francis Marion Hotel.

Title: **Walker avoids union talk**
Author: BY SCHUYLER KROPF skropf@postandcourier.com
Size: 145.54 square inch
Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



GRACE BEAHM/STAFF

Protesters gathered on King Street outside the Francis Marion Hotel where presidential hopeful Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker spoke at a Republican fundraising luncheon Friday.

Title: **Efforts to reverse nuclear waste deal disappoint Hodges**
 Author: BY TIM O'BRIANT tobriant@aikenstandard.com
 Size: 56.73 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



Efforts to reverse nuclear waste deal disappoint Hodges

BY TIM O'BRIANT
tobriant@aikenstandard.com

COLUMBIA — Despite the failure of his 2002 threats to “lie down in the road” and block federal shipments of plutonium bound for the Savannah River Site, former Gov. Jim Hodges did succeed in closing a Barnwell nuclear waste dump to the nation — a feat that had eluded a number of his predecessors.

A proposal from the company that operates the state-owned Barnwell low-level radioactive dump under lease would reverse the work of the Hodges administration to form the Atlantic Compact. That agreement limited the states from which the dump would accept waste and spread the costs of operating the facility among the three member states: New Jersey, Connecticut and South Carolina. Before that, the Barnwell facility was one of just three commercial nuclear dumps in the nation and the only one east of the Mississippi River.

“I don’t know how many times we have to fight this battle,” Hodges said Wednesday in an interview with the Aiken Standard. “In my legislative career, which spanned from 1986 to 1999 and four years as governor, we dealt with this issue three or four times. We finally reached a long-term solution.”

EnergySolutions, which operates the landfill under the name Chem-Nuclear, recently launched a statewide public relations effort that included television and online commercials. The effort’s website, truthaboutbarnwell.com, features information about the waste

site along with testimonials of support from Barnwell-area economic development officials and residents.

After the launch of that campaign, S.C. Sen. Brad Hutto, D-Orangeburg, whose district includes portions of Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Colleton, Hampton and Orangeburg counties, began discussing proposed legislation to change the way the dump operates.

According to media reports, Hutto’s suggestion was to open the dump to higher-level waste from around the nation so Chem-Nuclear could charge higher rates and thereby help pay for ongoing environmental management at the aging site.

Opened in 1969, the 235-acre facility holds 28 million cubic feet of material and has a history of leaching tritium — a radioactive form of hydrogen — into nearby tributaries of the Savannah River.

No bill has been filed, and Hutto has not responded to requests for an interview after editorials from newspapers around the state panned his suggestion.

In 1999, Hutto, then a freshman senator, was a member of the Nuclear Waste Task Force assembled by Hodges that recommended the Atlantic Compact and the closing of the dump to shipments from outside states.

“I’m disappointed that what I thought was good-faith bargaining, apparently, is being revisited,” Hodges said. “Some memories may be dimming,

but I remember it all pretty well.”

Hodges said he found the pro-environment reasoning being offered for the expansion of the waste stream 15 years later comical.

“Using a pro-environmental argument for taking higher-level waste to pay for environmental degradation that’s taken place there over time — that’s pretty unique and creative. I’m going to give them an ‘A’ for effort,” the former Democratic governor said.

Hodges said he understands the Barnwell community is very supportive of Chem-Nuclear, largely because of the jobs and money the facility has brought to the area over the years. The 2000 Atlantic Compact legislation recognized that, he said, and provided for a “soft landing” by allowing activity at the facility to wind down over the course of a decade.

“We need to show our resolve as a state and remain committed to a well thought-out plan that all the players agreed to,” he said. “The Barnwell community agreed on it, the state of South Carolina agreed on it, ... (Chem-Nuclear) agreed on it.”

Republican Gov. Nikki Haley echoed Hodges’ sentiment Thursday during a news conference on the topic, saying “we don’t sell our soul for jobs and money.” Improving the state’s environment and quality of life is far more important, she said.

Hodges said he remains proud of his efforts to defend the environment in South Carolina,

pointing out that he was right on Barnwell and right when he said plutonium that arrived in the state over his objections would be here long-term.

“Somebody predicted that was going to happen in 2002. ... I believe that was me,” he said.

At the time, Hodges went so far as to send state troopers to the Savannah River Site, a federal nuclear weapons installation, to stop any vehicles carrying some 6.5 tons of plutonium from the Department of Energy’s closed Rocky Flats site in Colorado. He never did lie down in front of any trucks after a federal court order required that he allow the shipments into the state.

Federal officials said the material would be converted at SRS into fuel for nuclear reactors. But Hodges had warned that the conversion program might never be funded and that the plutonium might be stored permanently in South Carolina.

While the mixed oxide, or MOX, fuel facility designed to reprocess the cache is now under construction more than a decade later, the project has survived several congressional attempts to cut or eliminate funding for it and the plutonium remains in storage at the site.

“The Savannah River Site has been a blessing for the region in terms of the good work that is provided for the people there,” Hodges said. “But, at the same time, we’ve borne our share, in terms of the environment, on dealing with issues there.”

Title: **Efforts to reverse nuclear waste deal disappoint Hodges**
Author: BY TIM O'BRIANT tobriant@aikenstandard.com
Size: 56.73 square inch
Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



Video

To see a video,
go to **postand**
courier.com/videos.



FILE

Former S.C. Gov. Jim Hodges



Title: Haley fights plan for Barnwell nuclear dump
Author: BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN croidan@postandcourier.com
Size: 58.74 square inch
Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289

Haley fights plan for Barnwell nuclear dump

'We don't sell our soul for jobs, money,' she says of request to reopen to all states

BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN
croidan@postandcourier.com

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley, in a preemptive strike aimed at heading off lobbying, announced Thursday she opposes letting a landfill in Barnwell County resume storing low-level radioactive waste from the entire nation.

During a news conference at the Statehouse, Haley said expanding the intake at the nuclear waste site could harm the quality of life in South Carolina and would be a "huge step back-

wards" for the state. "We don't sell our soul for jobs and money," Haley said. "I'm not willing to go in and take in nuclear waste that our kids and grandkids are going to have to deal with."

Haley said that her announcement was in response to Utah-based EnergySolutions contacting lawmakers and her staff about again letting every state dump nuclear waste at

the landfill. A call placed to the company's spokesman was not returned.

Since 2008, the landfill has been closed to all states except South Carolina, New Jersey and Connecticut, and the company is

Please see BARNWELL, Page A8

Inside

Former Gov. Hodges worried about efforts to make S.C. a

dumping ground. A8



Poll

Should the state allow a landfill in Barnwell County resume storing low-level radioactive waste from the entire nation? Go to postandcourier.com/polls to vote.

Haley fights plan for Barnwell nuclear dump

BARNWELL, from A1

under a court order to address radiation leaking into drinking water supplies for Hilton Head.

"Now there's an opportunity that's being presented in front of the Legislature to be able to take in more nuclear waste from other states, and we just want the Legislature to know we don't want to go in that direction," Haley said.

No bill has been introduced this session that would reopen the landfill to other states. Sen. Brad Hutto, D-Orangeburg, said there's only been discussion on the status of the site, adding the state could benefit from a change and opponents "don't even know what we're talking about yet."

Hutto said there has been no discussion on expanding the waste-storage site, which has about 13 percent capacity left.

"It's going to be filled under the current setup," Hutto said.

"The question is how we do that and the timetable. I think that's something we should review from time to time."

According to a recent article in the Deseret News of Salt Lake City, what could be under discussion is a plan to swap low-level radioactive waste in return for burying "hotter" waste at the Barnwell site.

Under an arrangement being shopped before S.C. legislators, EnergySolutions would ship low-level radioactive waste to Utah that had been bound for South Carolina. In return, South Carolina would receive the hotter waste for disposal, generating more income for state coffers, the newspaper reported.

The Barnwell County dump site is a 235-acre expanse that opened in 1971 close to the Georgia line. The equivalent of more than 40 tractor-trailers full of radioactive trash from 39 states was buried there each

year before South Carolina lawmakers in 2000 ordered the company to scale back because they no longer wanted the state to be the nation's dumping ground.

Trash sent to Barnwell included protective clothing and gloves, tools, cleaning rags, lab equipment, industrial measuring devices and equipment used to treat cancer patients. The waste was stored in steel containers that were put in concrete vaults and then buried in long trenches.

Rep. Chip Limehouse, R-Charleston, said he would file legislation to prevent the site from being opened to take in that amount of waste again. He added that his main concern would be the potential for pollution of groundwater.

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control has been monitoring trace amounts of tritium in the groundwater south of the Barnwell site since 1978. The

highest levels of tritium have been found near Mary's Branch Creek, an area that's off-limits to drinking, fishing, hunting, swimming and irrigation, but feeds into the Savannah River.

"This is the last thing we need for South Carolina," Limehouse said. "We're not the pay toilet for the United States of America's nuclear waste, and I'm going to be fighting it tooth and nail because this is not good for South Carolina."

The Associated Press contributed to this report. Reach Cynthia Roldan at 708-5891.

Palmetto Politics

For more political coverage, information on the Palmetto Politics app or to sign up for our newsletter, go to palmettopolitics.com.

Title: **Haley fights plan for Barnwell nuclear dump**
Author: BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN croidan@postandcourier.com
Size: 58.74 square inch
Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



Title: Gov. Haley says she'll compromise on roads, but only so far
Author: BY JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press
Size: 18.91 square inch
Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



Gov. Haley says she'll compromise on roads, but only so far

BY JEFFREY COLLINS
Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley warned lawmakers again Thursday that she won't approve just any proposal to get more money to fix South Carolina roads. She said she will veto any plan that doesn't provide some sort of tax cut.

"They might as well not waste their time," Haley said of any plan that doesn't have tax relief. "We just won't go there at all. We'll let everything fall to the wayside before we allow the people of South Carolina to see

a tax increase." The governor also reiterated at a news conference that she is willing to compromise. In her State of the State address Haley suggested a 10-cent per gallon increase in the gas tax, coupled with a 2 percentage point cut in the state income tax rate. She has said before she is willing to adjust those numbers or look at alternatives.

Both the House and Senate are working on their own plans. The version created by a special

House committee would keep the gas tax the same, but start charging sales tax on fuel and combine that with an income tax cut to raise about \$400 million extra a year. Haley's plan also has been introduced in the House.

A Senate plan that made it through Sen. Ray Cleary's roads subcommittee would raise around \$800 million in new money for roads by raising the gas tax by 10 cents and allowing it to continue to increase with inflation. It also raises the

sales tax cap on automobile purchases from \$300 to \$1,400, eliminates dozens of sales tax exemptions and increases the fees for car registrations and drivers' licenses.

The Department of Transportation has said \$400 million would be enough money to keep the roads in their current condition, while closer to \$1.5 billion is needed to get roads to good condition by 2040.

Cleary's plan would eliminate the income tax on small businesses.