

## Nuclear waste regulation proposal called 'nightmare'

By Chris Welsch and Chris Burbach

If the Lincoln City Council passes the resolution to regulate shipments of spent fuel from the Cooper Nuclear Power Plant next Monday, the results could affect utilities nationwide.

Jay Pilant, Nebraska Public Power District division manager for licensing and quality assurance, said that if this ordinance passes, other towns would feel free to pass similar resolutions.

Pilant said having to check each town's rules and regulations regarding transport of nuclear waste would be like having to get a new driver's license each time a person passed from town to town.

"It would be impossible to live with," he said. "It would be virtually a nightmare for the industry."

Pilant said that if the resolution passed, he was almost certain someone, if not NPPD, would file suit.

He said it wasn't the city's role to dictate transportation laws.

"What's the role of the Interstate Commerce Commission?" he asked.

Safety measures should be taken at the federal level so laws would be uniform, Pilant said.

The resolution to regulate the shipments on their journey from the Cooper plant to a temporary storage facility in Morris, Ill., was introduced by Councilman Eric Youngberg. At Monday's council meeting, Youngberg said his resolution is based on the premise that NPPD officials should prove that safety shipments will be conducted as safely as possible.

Youngberg said a national policy for such guidelines is needed desperately, but has been resisted by the federal government.

Carol Brt, a brakeperson for Burlington-Northern and representative of the United Transportation Union Local No. 305's Safe Energy and Full Employment Committee, said she thinks the proposed shipments are "merely the tip of the iceberg."

Brt said U.S. Department of Energy figures indicate 31 nuclear reactors are scheduled to run out of storage space for spent fuel before Cooper runs out in 1993.

A nuclear storage site probably would be established in Nevada or Utah. Of the 138 reactors licensed to operate by 1985, 107 are in the eastern half of the United States, she said.

This could lead to a lot of spent fuel riding the rails through Lincoln, she said.

Brt said several viable alternatives would eliminate the need to ship the wastes

through Lincoln for some time.

On-site dry storage and fuel rod consolidation are two ways the Cooper plant could extend storage facilities, she said.

According to DOE studies, economical methods of on-site dry storage will be available six to eight years before the Cooper plant runs out of space.

Brt said she had questions about the quality of the rail running from Nebraska City to Cooper Station because of statements in 1981 Annual Update, the Nebraska Rail Plan, issued by the Nebraska Department of Roads.

The update said the first six miles of track extending from Nebraska City towards Cooper Station are in good condition. However, the rest of the line is composed of varying lengths of rail. The lightest rail, laid in 1883, is in poor condition and weighs 56 pounds per three feet. The 75- and 85-pound rail was laid about 1910, but is satisfactory.

The report also states that a good deal (70 percent in places) of the ties are disintegrated, and that tie plates are lying on the ground.

Wilburn Colley, track inspector for the Nebraska Public Service Commission, said that to his knowledge, the track south of Nebraska City had been upgraded.

"There were several crews working on it last summer," Colley said. "It's probably not true (the Rail Update report of disintegrated ties)."

Colley's job is to monitor the weekly inspections conducted by Burlington-Northern. He said he recently inspected Burlington-Northern's records on the track and found everything to be in order.

Dan Schlitt, UNL professor of physics, said he was concerned about the credibility of those who designed and tested the casks because of mistakes they have made.

Schlitt said the casks originally were designed to have water as a coolant. The casks were equipped with pressure valves that would release the pressure in case of extreme heat. The valves then would close, he said. However, the valves didn't close, so the designers abandoned them, he said.

General Electric, which tested the current casks by computer, erred in the information they fed the computer about the critical mass of the spent fuel rods, he said. Because of that error, GE failed to prove that the assembly wouldn't deteriorate in such a way that criticality would occur.

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## SCHOOL BILLS

### Determining the quality of education

By Mona Koppelman

Roxie and Lonny Olson of North Platte enrolled the oldest of their three sons in a public school and then a Lutheran school, each time for two years.

"We've seen both sides of the religious school issue," Olson said. "And we were disappointed with each."

Since August 1982, all of the Olson children have been taught at home. The curriculum was designed by the Christian Liberty Academy of Prospect Hills, Ill.

"Educators talk about teaching the kids values and morals," Mrs. Olson said. "This is offensive to us because they can't use the Bible as a basis for anything. They won't even acknowledge God."

"How can they teach our children any morals or values that would be acceptable to us as Christians?" she asked.

The Olsons were two of 16 people who testified Wednesday evening before the Legislature's Education Committee regarding three bills affecting Nebraska's unapproved schools. Unapproved schools include those sponsored by a religious organization and those in the home of a parent.

Sen. Howard Peterson of Grand Island introduced LB45 and LB46, bills that would permit religious schools to hire teachers without state certification and exempt such schools from required attendance and other State Department of Education regulations.

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## 'No need to evacuate' after CBA bomb threat

A bomb threat prompted officials to search the College of Business Administration building early Thursday morning.

The building was searched and no bomb was found, said Frank Costa, deputy state fire marshal.

"The facility was not evacuated," UNL Police spokesman Bob Fey said, "but no additional people were allowed in until the building was searched."

A university operator received the bomb threat at about 8:33 a.m. Thursday. The content of the conversation, however, will not be released until it can be investigated further, Fey said.

"We had been notified that there may be a bomb, but no time or date was given," Costa said. "There was no need to

evacuate; it was just a routine check."

The Lincoln Fire Department, the UNL Police Department and the state fire marshal were notified and dispatched.

Officials announced the building to be "all clear" at about 8:58 a.m., and people then were allowed in the building, Fey said.

Gary Schwendiman, dean of the College of Business Administration, was not in his office when the bomb threat was called in, but his office was notified, Fey said.

"It was really pretty simple," said Billie Lefholtz, an administrative assistant to Schwendiman. "No classes were disrupted, and I doubt if many people know about it."

From top: Deacon Ewalt Hageman, left, and the Rev. Everett Sileven listen to the discussion at the Capitol Wednesday; Sen. Howard Peterson of Grand Island presents opening comments on the hearing for LB45 and LB46; while Ron Stoddard and his son, Eric, of Hershey, Neb., listen in.

