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SRS neighbors have mixed views

Web posted Sunday, June 23, 2002

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By **Jennifer Holland**
[Associated Press](#)

AIKEN, S.C. — Harry Holston has lived a lifetime within miles of nuclear material and a new shipment of plutonium isn't going to keep him up at night.

"I've got six kids, two grandkids and they've all grown up next to the bomb plant and we have no problem with it," Holston said Saturday at a corner convenience store near the U.S. Energy Department's sprawling Savannah River Site.

On Saturday, there were more political campaign signs for Tuesday's Republican runoffs than there were people outside the plant's entrance.

Any day now, the Energy Department will begin shipments of six tons of weapons-grade plutonium that will be trucked from Rocky Flats in Colorado to South Carolina's former nuclear weapons site on the Georgia border.

After more than a year of harsh words and a court fight, South Carolina Gov. Jim Hodges was ordered to drop efforts to block shipments this week.

Holston said the shipments don't need the uproar.

"If you keep it confidential and move it in small quantities, we've got nothing to worry about," said Holston, a 40-year-old New Ellenton trucker. "It's getting to the gate that we've got to worry about."

Biker Dorsey "Cowboy" King, 48, doesn't want his state to continue to be a nuclear dumping ground. South Carolina already has one of the nation's only low-level nuclear waste sites.

"It shouldn't be here. We've got enough," King said. "I drilled out there for years and we found all kinds of contamination in the water and ground," said King, who worked for an environmental monitoring company at the site.

So far, about 600 containers are packed and ready to move from the Energy Department's Rocky Flats facility in Colorado. In all, about 2,000 of the 35-gallon containers will head to the Savannah River Site.

Plans to convert that material into a fuel for commercial nuclear reaction continue to draw criticism.

Leaders of the Green Party from North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia said Saturday they supported Gov. Jim Hodges' efforts to block the plutonium, but disagreed with plans to convert the plutonium.

"We oppose plutonium fuel and are dedicated to fighting any plans to force this dangerous poison onto our communities," said Tom Turnipseed, chairman of the South Carolina Green Party.

Turnipseed said the group will recruit candidates for the fall elections that will run and raise visibility about plutonium shipped to the Savannah River Site near Aiken and the

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plans to convert it to fuel.



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