# PIC – Waste

### 1NC: Waste CP

#### Counterplan – States ought to reduce its nuclear arsenals to explosives intended to excavate cavities for storing nuclear waste.

#### Its a tested method for safely eliminating waste.

Madrigal ’09 Alexis (staff writer at The Atlantic and the author of Powering the Dream: The History and Promise of Green Technology). "7 (Crazy) Civilian Uses for Nuclear Bombs." *WIRED*, 10 April 2009, <https://www.wired.com/2009/04/yourfriendatom/>. MBPZ

Disposing of Nuclear Waste One of the most incredible proposed applications of a nuclear explosion is to help store nuclear waste itself. The idea was detailed in a 1973 article in Science: This scheme was originally proposed at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. A hole is bored beneath the waste processing plant, and a nuclear bomb is set off in the hole. Then the radioactive waste is poured into the subterranean cavity so formed, over a 25-year filling period. The wastes heat up through their own activity, boil dry, and eventually melt themselves and some surrounding rock into a glassy ball. The cost is quite uncertain but was judged to be extremely attractive. What could possibly go wrong with setting off a nuclear explosion underneath a nuclear waste processing plant? Ultimately, despite its creativity, the plan was abandoned. Building such a cavity, though, was quite possible, as you can see in this video from the early operation Project Gnome in New Mexico. Nordyke actually walked the cavern in the video. "I was one of the lucky people who got to go into that cavern," he said. "The week after I went in there, they shut the place down." Why was it possible for people to walk around a few months after the explosion? Nordyke said the Plowshare team designed a series of weapons that contained very little fissionable material, which is what makes radioactivity dangerous to humans. "For excavation, we put a lot of time and effort and money into developing nuclear explosives which had minimal fissionable material so that you could carry out a 100-kiloton cratering explosion and release the radioactivity equivalent to a 20-ton explosive of fissionable material," Nordyke said. But despite the technical success of the Plowshare program, Nordyke doesn’t see nuclear weapons being used for excavation or mining anytime soon because it doesn’t seem politically feasible. "I think its time came and went," he said. "I think reconciling it with the enhanced environmental concerns today and the inherent association with weapons is difficult."

#### Turns the aff – absent a permanent underground storage solution, waste will devastate communities via leaks, contamination, and transportation accidents – that turns the aff because it contributes to a system of structural violence and settler colonialism.

Boeckers '19 Andrea. "Environmental Racism: Nuclear Waste as an Agent of Oppression?." Across the Bridge: The Merrimack Undergraduate Research Journal, Volume 1, Article 3, 2019, <https://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=atb>. MBPZ

Globally, there are currently 450 active nuclear power plants that create nuclear waste.6 Not every country in the world is home to a nuclear plant, but it is an ongoing battle to figure out what to do with the waste for the countries that do. International safety standards require long-term waste management facilities to be in areas with low population densities, geological stability, and low flood danger. To date, only one country in the world has successfully sited a permanent storage facility; buried deep under an island in the Baltic, Finland is constructing the world’s first permanent nuclear-waste repository, and it is nearing completion. The project began as early as 1980, and Finnish scientists planned to base their project after repositories being designed by the United States, Germany, and other countries that had already started the process.7 In reality, every other country has been unable to establish permanent sites due to pushback from the public, state and local governments, or in some cases, native peoples. Major countries around the world, including Canada, Russia, and Australia, as well as large powers within the European Union such as United Kingdom, France, and Germany, have all been unsuccessful in opening a permanent storage site for nuclear waste. The waste currently remains stockpiled in temporary locations, mainly at the plants where it originates. The problem is becoming more urgent as power plants and temporary storage sites across the world are filling up and were not originally built to hold the radioactive waste for an extended period of time. This practice of spread out temporary storage is not only unsustainable, but it is more dangerous than building long-term depositories deep underground where the material can decay for tens of thousands of years. However, it is clear that establishing a permanent site is not as simple as it may seem. The permanent site must, first and foremost, fit international safety standards. Next, and arguably the most difficult part, is convincing local governments and communities living near where the repository might be constructed. A group of protesters in Germany established a camp in Bure to prevent the construction of an underground repository in their town. Those who were born and raised in the community, and surrounding areas say they will not give up and are prepared for a lasting fight. The government has offered money as a form of compensation for communities who take on this responsibility, but the effect of the outreach has been, at best, mixed.8 The narrative is astonishingly similar in other countries around the world. The promise of economic opportunity, specifically money and job creation, has not been enough to pursuade local communities who express concerns over safety issues and the danger for the environment. The problem with nuclear waste is any harmful effects may not present themselves right away. The risk of radiation leaks, water contamination, and transportation accidents plague more than the immediate location of the repository. In summary, nobody wants to have the waste, but everyone wants the energy.9 Indigenous populations have been disproportionately impacted by the nuclear industry, specifically in Australia and the United States. Tribal sovereignty grants native peoples autonomy in their decision-making and makes indigenous lands exempt from many state laws and many environmental and health regulations. Specifically within the United States, Native communities have a unique government-to-government relationship with the federal government, and any decisions made by American Indian tribes regarding their land and communities are independent from other entities within the American political system. Sovereignty, combined with centuries of oppression and being stripped of their land and resources, places these communities at a tremendous economic and political disadvantage. Many American Indian communities are impoverished and have the lowest employment rate of any racial or ethnic group; some tribes report unemployment as high as eighty-five percent.10 In the case of radioactive waste storage and disposal, governments and the nuclear industry are able to take advantage of these vulnerabilities. Further, part of the requirements for a long-term repository location include a low public occupancy factor and a low traffic area.11 A significant portion of indigenous peoples live in isolated rural areas, making their territory an already prioritized location. The governments and private corporations of Australia and the United States have promised large sums of money to any community that consents to hosting a long-term repository. The argument for some is that an increase in capital combined with the potential for job creation through the