

# CURE witnesses spike Triassic

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Attorneys for CURE (Conservative use of Resources and Environment) are close to finalizing their presentation in opposition to Triassic Park, the proposed hazardous waste disposal site 43 miles east of Roswell near Tatum.

Heather Green and Douglas Mieklejohn put on seven non technical witnesses from CURE Wednesday before calling the first of their technical witnesses.

The first non-technical witness for CURE was

Jimi Gadzia, who read a statement chronicling her four month involvement with the group. She said she was threatened with arrest by Gandy Marley Inc., government affairs representative Ken Schultz in May if she passed out CURE literature at a GMI informational session at the Sally Port Inn. Gadzia said the motel's manager on duty overruled Schultz and allowed the group to continue.

Gadzia, whose term has expired, continues to sit on the Environmental Improvement Board until she is replaced, has recused herself from any matters the board may hear involving Trias-

sic Park. Before she left the witness stand she touched on her doubts of economic impact on Chaves County from Triassic Park and expressed concern over transportation of hazardous waste through Roswell, air quality over time and deterioration of roads with increased traffic.

Holly Harris-Shott was next in line for CURE. She outlined her concerns over the proposed site in proximity to her home. She lives at Bottomless Lake State Park, about 20 miles from where Triassic Park would be located.

Harris-Shott said health problems could affect her 18-month-old daughter and other family

members.

She was the first in a series of witnesses to indicate she was troubled that a terrorist attack on Triassic Park could cause serious problems for the region.

Michael Porter took the stand for CURE to explain there had been more support of his group than for GMI and read into the record locations of supporters that included residents of nine states. Porter spent a good deal of time suggesting technological advances in disposal would

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likely occur rendering Triassic Park antique before the permit expired in 10 years. He was troubled the site might be "grandfathered in" precluding GMI from updating its facility.

Porter pointed out both grammatical and text errors to the New Mexico Environmental Department permit application that caused ambiguity.

Deborah Petrone testified she worried that political corruption on local and state levels might in some way compromise the integrity of the permitting process. Petrone also indicated there might be psychological damage caused to area residents living in the vicinity of a hazardous waste disposal facility.

Before she was excused, Petrone suggested southeast New Mexico was targeted for waste disposal sites because of its socioeconomic and ethnic population.

Elisabeth Price revisited the threat of a terrorist attack, troubled by the fact the facility had no plans for security patrols or television cameras to watch over possible penetration of the grounds.

The final non-technical testimony from CURE came in the person of Librado de la O who spoke through an interrupter. He briefly outlined his concerns of water and potential health problems for his family members. The soft spoken longtime Hagerman resident also said safety issues at Triassic Park were of concern to him.

Before the lunch recess hydrologist George Rice began his technical testimony on aspects of possible water contamination and suspected miscalculations by GMI's geologists and engineers.

Rice sat through a withering, square by square cross examination by GMI's Peter V. Domenici Jr., lasting nearly three hours. Domenici probed tirelessly into the way Rice arrived at his conclusions of possible faults in GMI's team of experts.

The final expert witness for CURE was James Bailey, widely recognized as an authority on the Lesser Prairie Chicken and its habitat. Bailey told the hearing the bird warranted being on the threatened species list and had only 21 percent of its original habitat remaining.

Bailey concluded that the noise and human activity around the proposed site likely would affect the birds breeding.

As important, but dry as the afternoon's technical testimony was, is how loose and unstructured was the evening public comments period.

A total of six people offered public comment, including state Senator Tim Jennings of Roswell. Jennings said despite occasional differences of opinion, he knew both the Marley and Gandy families and knew them to be honorable people.

But Jennings worries about possible imported hazardous waste from both sides of the border coming to the proposed site. Jennings was also troubled about lack of jobs and economic development from the project. He spoke of the possible federal legislation to ensure rejected waste by GMI being returned to its originator and a possible fee for taking in someone else's waste.

The tone of the evening's public hearing was set by Betty Richards who sang into the public record, to the tune of "Ballin the Jack":

First you hold the public hearings far and wide

Just to make the people think your on their side

Meanwhile secret meetings make the real policies

But if you did your job you wouldn't need the secrecy

Then you give the appearance you care what we think

You bend the rules to fool us fools, nod and wink

Give that permit out like a big glass check

And that's what I call stackin the deck.

Hearing Officer Felicia Orth smiled politely and after listening to the rest of the public comments listed what she thought would be the schedule for the rest of the week.

This morning at 9 a.m., CARE attorneys planned to call Paul Robinson to testify about financial assurances with regard to closure. The testimony is expected to deal with handling events 30 years after the proposed permit and waste site's closing and the money needed to ensure compliance with state statutes.

Deborah Reade, research director for CARD (Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping) will be given 30 to 45 minutes to present her material for the record.

Following Reade, New Mexico Environmental Department representatives will give a presentation prior to the meeting being adjourned.

Tonight from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. will probably be the last public comment hearing because of the previous two days sparse turnout.