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## Thirty-One Percent of TN Landfills Leak

*New report finds some accept special radioactive waste*

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(Kingsport, TN) TN Clean Water Network pointed to Hawkins County's Carter Valley Landfill today as an example of the TN Department of Environment and Conversation's (TDEC) lack of control over leaking landfills contaminating our ground and surface water. This announcement came on the heels of a report by the Nuclear Information and Resource Service showing the State of Tennessee is a leader in licensing processors that can release radioactive materials into our municipal landfills.

"Thirty-one percent of our landfills are leaking," stated Rachael Bliss, TCWN Director of Community Organizing. "Radioactive waste should not be accepted in our municipal dumps since TDEC has already demonstrated their inability to properly protect our water and communities from toxic landfill leachate."

Last year, statistics from TDEC showed of the 225 permitted landfills across the state, 69 or 31% were leaking. Landfill leachate, contaminates drinking water sources like groundwater and surface water with toxic pollutants that are known to cause birth defects, cancer, learning disabilities and other health problems.

"People around regular trash landfills will be shocked to learn that radioactive contamination from nuclear weapons production is ending up there, either directly released by DOE or via brokers and processors," Stated Diane D'Arrigo, Nuclear Information and Resource Service.

D'Arrigo is one author of the recently released report, *Out of Control — On Purpose: DOE's Dispersal of Radioactive Waste into Landfills and Consumer Products*. The report was commissioned to track if and how the Department of Energy (DOE) releases some of the low radioactive wastes from nuclear bomb production.

The report found the State of Tennessee is a leader in licensing processors that can release radioactive materials into our municipal landfills.

There are four Class I landfills authorized to receive such wastes: Chestnut Ridge in Anderson County, North Shelby County, Middle Point in Rutherford County, and Carter Valley in Hawkins County.

“TDEC’s data from 2006 shows 44% of Class I landfills are leaking.” Stated Mark Quarles P.G. Globally Green Consulting. Quarles notes that 54 of the 122 (44%) permitted Class I landfills are leaking despite Class I landfills being held to the highest design standards.

Moreover, 15 of the 38 active Class I Municipal Landfills are leaking. This means approximately 40% of TN’s landfills that are held to the highest existing design standards and are actively accepting waste are leaking.

Local residents who prided themselves on the clean water from private wells before the Carter Valley Landfill began operations, finally took up a petition to receive utility district water when people downstream from the landfill discovered their wells were contaminated.

TDEC issued civil fines and penalties at Carter’s Valley Landfill in October 2006 after 2005 groundwater monitoring found contamination in the groundwater.

Additionally, TCWN found that of the 69 landfills across the state known to be leaking, TDEC required corrective action for groundwater contamination at less than 5 of those landfills, including Dickson County, Sevier County, City of McKenzie, and Smelter Services Class 2 landfill in Mt. Pleasant.

Action needed by the Department to control Tennessee’s leaking landfills include the regulation of landfills according to TDEC’s Division of Solid Waste Management. Among these regulations are remediation of groundwater contamination, monitoring groundwater and methane gas. Another step in this process is requiring the 69 leaking landfills to come into compliance with TDEC’s regulations.

“Consistent and efficient enforcement of landfill regulations can prevent an entire community’s exposure to toxic leachate through ground and surface water.” Concluded Bliss.

Dickson County’s landfill received national attention for what is believed to be the community’s exposure to trichloroethene from leachate in drinking water supplies causing birth defects. The contamination occurred despite the landfill being built under stringent EPA guidelines and the old landfill’s closure in 2003.

For more information visit [www.tcwn.org](http://www.tcwn.org)

To read *Out of Control — On Purpose: DOE's Dispersal of Radioactive Waste into Landfills and Consumer Products* visit: <http://www.nirs.org/radwaste/outofcontrol/outofcontrol.htm> For the press release visit: <http://www.nirs.org/press/05-14-2007/1>

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