



STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305 • (415) 321-1200

STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
Department of Genetics

SEP 14 1972

Dr. Alvin Weinberg  
Director, Oak Ridge National Laboratory  
Oak Ridge, Tenn.

Dear Al:

A propos the safe disposal of radioactive wastes,  
has any serious study been made of the possibility of "burning" them?

I have in mind either a) something close to the present art, incorporating the wastes in underground fusion devices, or

b) hypothetical projections of the likelihood of such disposal capabilities as a byproduct of fusion power systems within the next hundred years.

Even a reasonable possibility of such developments should obviously influence the design of systems, otherwise predicated on making the wastes maximally inaccessible for many centuries.

It would not utterly surprise me to hear that "burning" would aggravate the problem, rather than help it, to sufficient certainty to disqualify such a solution. But I would hope that the problem has been looked at from the point of view of finding a conceivable answer in such a direction, rather than finding plausible reasons to discard it. I just don't have the technical background to pursue such a question any further.

Sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg

WEINBERG, Alvin

*Enc: also AP JS*