

LOBBY WATCH

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To Curie Favor:

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Don't Trash Texas— Unless You Pay Perry \$1.1 Million

**A billionaire gives the governor \$500,000 more
to make Texas the nation's nuclear waste dump.**

Reporting in April that Dallas billionaire Harold Simmons had contributed \$620,000 to Governor Rick Perry, *Lobby Watch* questioned how Perry's appointees could objectively regulate Simmons' nuclear ambitions. That question looms larger after Simmons gave Perry another \$500,000 this year. Having given him a total of \$1,120,000, Simmons now ranks as the governor's No. 2 individual donor.¹ That sounds like a pile of cash...until you consider the enormity of what Simmons demands in return.

Simmons seeks a permit to dump low-level nuclear waste from all over the nation in West Texas. He effectively completed the political portion of that application when he surpassed the \$1 million mark with Texans for Rick Perry. Now Perry's appointees are fixing to act on Simmons' demands. Despite what's at stake, playful politicians have made a game of it. They want everybody to pretend as if Simmons' application would be treated the same *whether or not he submitted it with a \$1.1 million check.*

That's rich.

Not wanting to touch nuclear waste itself, Congress ordered states to form multi-state compacts to tackle the gunk themselves. Texas formed a 1993 compact with teeny-weeny Vermont to dump radioactive waste from both states in Texas.² Simmons' Waste Control Specialists holds an exclusive license to dump the compact's junk in West Texas. The Texas Low Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact Commission oversees this dirty business, with two Vermont-appointed commissioners and six Perry appointees.



King's Ransom: Simmons' \$1.1 Million Dump On Gov. Perry— And Texas Citizens

Amount To Rick Perry	Date
\$25,000	6/12/2001
\$25,000	5/31/2002
\$50,000	9/12/2002
\$25,000	8/20/2003
\$25,000	3/12/2004
\$50,000	6/28/2005
\$15,000	9/8/2006
\$250,000	10/30/2006
\$25,000	8/7/2007
\$25,000	5/21/2008
\$5,000	10/14/2008
\$100,000	6/25/2009
\$250,000	8/6/2010
\$250,000	9/30/2010
\$1,120,000	TOTAL

The appointees of Vermont's lame-duck governor have been in Simmons' camp, as have four of the six Perry appointees. Yet Vermont Governor-Elect Peter Shumlin says he opposes Texas importing nuclear waste from states other than his own. Shumlin wants to shutter the leaky Vermont Yankee nuclear plant. If Texas opens its nuclear borders, he fears that Waste Control's dump could fill up before Vermont ships all its radioactive liabilities to Texas. Shumlin and others fear that regulators will grant Simmons a permit before Vermont's new governor takes office on January 6 and appoints two new commissioners.³

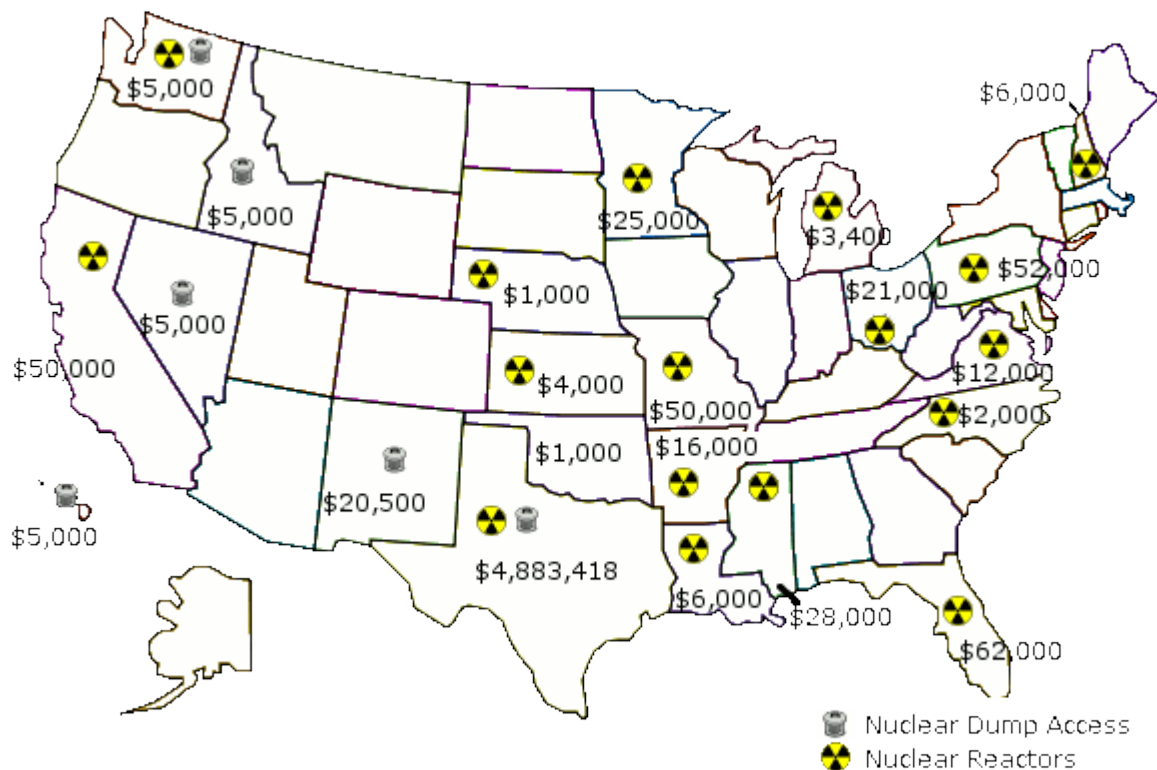
Meanwhile, Simmons has been on a national shopping spree for radioactive waste to import to Texas. Over the past five years political committees and executives affiliated with his two main holding companies⁴ doled out \$379,900 to state politicians in 21 states other than Texas, according to the Montana-based National Institute on Money in State Politics.

Outside Texas, the Simmons camp has a preference for politicians in nuclear-power states that have no place to dump their radioactive waste (see map).⁵ Nuclear-power states received 91 percent of Simmons-related contributions outside Texas. Just one nuclear-powered state attracting Simmons money already has access to a nuclear dump (Washington). New Mexico, which attracted more Simmons money than any other state without a commercial reactor, sits on the cusp of Waste Control's dump in Andrews County, Texas. During the same period, Simmons-related contributors gave \$4.9 million to Texas state candidates and PACs. Governor Perry accounted for 20 percent of that haul.

The radioactive waste to be dumped near West Texas aquifers will be hot for tens of thousands of years.⁶ Waste Control's license extends a mere 15 years. Thereafter that gullible sap—the Texas taxpayer—will be left holding the bag. •

Radioactive Waste Shopping

Simmons-Related Contributions to State Politicians, 2005-Present



Source: Non-Texas data from the National Institute on Money in State Politics.

NOTES

¹ Houston homebuilder Bob Perry has given Governor Perry (no relation) more than \$2.5 million.

² Maine was a member of the original compact before it withdrew.

³ "Race To Dispose of Nuke Waste," *New York Times*, December 2, 2010.

⁴ Contran Corp. and Valhi, Inc.

⁵ The Barnwell dump in South Carolina services the Atlantic Compact (CT, SC and NJ). Another dump in Richland, Washington serves both the Rocky Mountain Compact (CO, NM and NV) and the Northwest Interstate Compact (AK, HI, ID, MT, OR, UT, WA and WY). The Waste Control site in Texas is permitted to take compact waste from Texas and Vermont. Other states have nowhere to go—unless Simmons' pending application is approved, as expected. See "United States Commercial 'Low-Level' Radioactive Waste Disposal Sites Fact Sheet," Nuclear Information and Resource Center, April 2009.

www.nirs.org/factsheets/wastesitesfctst43009.pdf

⁶ The Ogallala (or High Plains), Pecos Valley (or Cenozoic Pecos Alluvium), and Edwards-Trinity Plateau. See "Harold Simmons Is Dallas' Most Evil Genius," *D Magazine*, February 2010.

