

Senate Resolution 1017

By: Senator Thomas of the 2nd

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging congressional action to ensure all necessary steps are taken to protect the people of
2 Georgia from terrorist, environmental, safety, and health threats posed by plutonium
3 transported through our state and processed, stored, and handled near our borders, including
4 minimizing the need for any such transport, processing, storage, or handling of plutonium;
5 and for other purposes.

6 WHEREAS, plutonium is a highly radioactive and chemically toxic material that in
7 extremely small amounts can cause human sickness or death; and

8 WHEREAS, plutonium is a key ingredient of nuclear weapons and a prime target for terrorist
9 attack; and

10 WHEREAS, the United States government plans to transport plutonium metal and oxides
11 across the State of Georgia to the Savannah River Site in Aiken, South Carolina, directly
12 across the Savannah River on Georgia's eastern border; and

13 WHEREAS, the Savannah River Site, as a nuclear weapons and materials facility, is
14 determined to be at high risk of terrorist attack, especially after the attacks on the United
15 States on September 11th, 2001; and

16 WHEREAS, the Savannah River Site's only plutonium storage facility, the decommissioned
17 and later modified K-Reactor, is, as determined by the United States Defense Nuclear
18 Facilities Safety Board, "an aged facility," which was "never intended to provide more than
19 interim storage"; and

20 WHEREAS, immobilization, the only plutonium disposal and cleanup program capable of
21 handling certain plutonium wastes (destined to be shipped across Georgia to the Savannah
22 River Site), was cancelled by the United States Department of Energy, thus leaving this

1 plutonium with no disposal option and the likelihood of indefinite and inadequate storage on
2 Georgia's eastern border; and

3 WHEREAS, Georgia's groundwater in Burke County is contaminated with radioactive
4 tritium from plutonium processing operations at the Savannah River Site; and

5 WHEREAS, the Savannah River and the plants and aquatic species living in it are
6 contaminated with plutonium, strontium, cesium, and other radionuclides and toxins from
7 plutonium processing operations at the Savannah River Site in an area stretching downstream
8 from the Savannah River Site to the City of Savannah; and

9 WHEREAS, the Savannah River Site has extensive groundwater contamination and houses
10 over 34 million gallons of highly radioactive waste and during peak operations releases
11 radioactive particles into the air that contaminate Georgia's environment; and

12 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Energy is planning to build new plutonium
13 production facilities at the Savannah River Site, including a Pit Disassembly and Conversion
14 Facility, a Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility, and is exploring building a new Plutonium
15 Pit Manufacturing Facility, each of which increases risks of plutonium and other radioactive
16 releases into the South Carolina and Georgia environment and, in the case of the Mixed
17 Oxide Fuel and Plutonium Pit facilities, creates a highly vulnerable and dangerous plutonium
18 product; and

19 WHEREAS, new plutonium production missions divert attention and resources from the
20 critical job of cleanup at the Savannah River Site, which continues to contaminate and pose
21 a threat to the environment of the State of Georgia.

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
23 urge the 107th Congress to reduce the threat of terrorist theft or environmental release of
24 plutonium by minimizing in all ways the need for transport, processing, storage, and handling
25 of plutonium through or near the State of Georgia; by addressing in the most expeditious and
26 cost-effective manner possible the need to secure plutonium from theft or diversion; by fully
27 funding programs that will clean up, dispose of, and protect plutonium from dispersion into
28 the environment, such as immobilization; by foregoing any new plutonium processing
29 programs that are not related to the direct disposal and cleanup of plutonium; and by
30 foregoing any programs that produce new plutonium fuel or materials for new nuclear
31 weapons.

- 1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
- 2 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to each member of the 107th Congress.