

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

July 14, 2023

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Secretary Granholm,

New reports detailed a decades-long effort to downplay and conceal the risks of radioactive contamination in St. Louis, Missouri.¹ The details of the report are appalling. Despite knowing of contamination at the St. Louis airport as early as 1976, the Department of Energy concealed it from the public until 1990, almost 25 years. During that time, the contamination was leaking, spreading into nearby Coldwater Creek.

At the same time, the government stood by while private companies illegally spread irradiated soil across greater St. Louis. The report details illegal dumping by Cotter Corporation at West Lake Landfill; illegal dumping that the government knew about. Despite Cotter's clear violation of federal law, the government secretly decided to let the company off the hook.

These incidents are, as the report says, "the tip of the iceberg." There are too many incidents of concealed contamination and negligent testing to reproduce in this letter. And these incidents are not confined to the distant past, the DOE has ignored calls for further testing in the St. Louis area just this year.

The allegations in this report demand answers. The people of St. Louis have a right to know the full extent of radioactive contamination in their community. They deserve answers about the government's historical actions and they deserve answers about allegations of continuing deception. To that end, please provide my office with answers to the following questions:

¹ Michael Phillips and Jim Salter, *How America's push for the atomic bomb spawned enduring radioactive waste problems in St. Louis*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (July 12, 2023) <https://apnews.com/article/nuclear-waste-cancer-st-louis-army-corps-school-9e1ceb765822fc53fcbc2e42005adef2>; Allison Kite, *Records reveal 75 years of government downplaying, ignoring risks of St. Louis radioactive waste*, THE MISSOURI INDEPENDENT (July 12, 2023) <https://missouriindependent.com/2023/07/12/st-louis-radioactive-waste-records/>.

1. Why did the Energy Research and Development Administration, now the Department of Energy, not disclose evidence of radioactive contamination in St. Louis for 25 years after discovering it?
2. Why did the Atomic Energy Commission decide not to prosecute or sue Cotter Corp. for its illegal disposal of radioactive materials?
3. Why did the Atomic Energy Commission decide not to prosecute or sue Continental Mining and Milling Co. for its improper and unsafe storage of radioactive materials?
4. In light of these new allegations showing DOE's failure to prevent the spread of this contamination, do you plan to undertake further testing and remediation in the St. Louis area?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Josh Hawley
United States Senator