5-minute TESTIMONY against HB 2214  
about planning evacuation for nuclear war

Monday January 22, 2018, 1:30 pm  
in House Hearing Room D in the O’Brien Bldg.

House Committee on Public Safety

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I’m Glen Anderson, a lifelong Washingtonian.

I believe in honesty and practicality. Public policy should help people recognize truth and not deceive people. This is why I OPPOSE House Bill 2214.

People who are knowledgeable and sensible have long since discredited the notion that we can evacuate or relocate in order to survive nuclear war. HB 2214 deceives people by creating the illusion that nuclear war is survivable.

In the early 1980s when President Reagan was escalating the nuclear arms race and pretending that nuclear war would be OK, one of his top experts said that a nuclear war might kill 50 million Americans, but that this would be a victory for the U.S. if we killed MORE THAN 50 million people in the Soviet Union.

Decent Americans opposed that madness.

T.K. Jones was President Reagan’s Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces. This top expert in Reagan’s Pentagon said that if a nuclear war became imminent, each person should:

“Dig a hole, cover it with a couple of doors and then throw three feet of dirt on top…. It’s the dirt that does it…. [i]f there enough shovels to go around, everybody’s going to make it.”

The plan was utterly preposterous for so many, many reasons!

This was President Reagan’s top expert on protecting us from imminent nuclear war.

If a nuclear attack were imminent we would have only a few minutes before we’d die.

In the 1980s, the official plan for evacuating Seattle was to load everybody from Seattle into Metro buses, drive across Snoqualmie Pass to Yakima, and empty the passengers. Then the Metro bus drivers would drive back to Seattle and fill the buses again, deliver them to Yakima, and keep making round trips until Seattle was empty. I don’t know about the plans for the other millions of people in the rest of King County, Pierce County, Snohomish County, and elsewhere.

In 1982 people throughout the nation were organizing the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign to stop the arms race. Voters in Thurston County passed our local Freeze ballot issue with a landslide majority, as voters across the country were doing. During this 1982 campaign we invited the official responsible for the Thurston County Sheriff’s Department to speak to an audience about Thurston County’s evacuation plan. It was absolutely ridiculous. We were committed to listening politely, but I noticed some people struggling hard to keep from laughing.

Last October Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (WPSR) produced a statement about evacuation in the face of disasters. I am not speaking officially on their behalf, but I do want to quote this part of their recent statement:

“PSR and WPSR have long argued that there is no feasible, relevant medical or public health response to a nuclear explosion or war, nor is it remotely feasible to consider the evacuation of cities in the event of an impending nuclear attack.” …

“We reiterate that all efforts must be focused on reducing and eventually eliminating nuclear weapons, coupled with interim diplomatic efforts to reduce the risk of their use. All other efforts at so-called ‘emergency preparedness’ for a nuclear attack are misleading and irresponsible, and can only perpetuate the myth that we can survive a nuclear attack.”

Their statement urges the State of Washingon to continue prohibiting evacuation planning for a nuclear attack.

Washington State needs to work on legitimate, practical emergency management plans without diverting attention and resources into the deceptive illusion that nuclear war is survivable.

HB 2214 would roll us backward into a culture of lies and – therefore – cause people to distrust the Legislature and the State government.

I urge you to REJECT HB 2214.

Thank you.