Local Governments and the Future of Waste Management and Disposal

Kara Colton
Director of Nuclear Energy Programs
Energy Communities Alliance
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Nuclear Waste Update

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Energy Communities Alliance

ECA is the national, non-profit organization of local governments adjacent to and impacted by DOE nuclear activities

- Home to federally-owned and operated nuclear facilities
- Decades of experience working with DOE, Congress and states
- Potential hosts for new nuclear facilities (nuclear waste storage, nuclear waste disposal and nuclear power production)
Defense HLW and SNF in Storage in the U.S.

- Hanford ~ 2130 MTHM
- INL ~270+ MTHM
- Fort St. Vrain, CO ~15 MTHM
- Savannah River Site ~30 MTHM

*includes spent naval fuel
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Current Efforts to Address Nuclear Waste Management

**Positives**

- The Administration has a strategy
- Public comment considered in Senate legislation (S. 1240)
- Consent-based siting process based on sound science, “meaningful collaboration with affected communities,” flexibility and transparency
- “Local, state and federal governments as equal partners”
- Affected communities to decide whether, and on what terms, the affected communities will host a nuclear facility
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Current Efforts to Address Nuclear Waste Management

**Challenges**

- Timeline/sense of urgency
- Resources for education, outreach and feasibility studies
- Defining a consent-based process
- Prioritization of government-owned/generated HLW
- Trust
- Future of Yucca Mountain
- Minimizing political influence
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ECA Priorities

- Local government involvement throughout the entire decision-making process
- Engage with federal, state and tribal governments
- Funding for education and outreach
- Funding for independent technical analysis
- Disposition of government-owned/generated HLW
- Define consent-based process
- Support efforts for assured access to funding
- Impact on DOE Cleanup Program
- Timeline
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Role of Local Governments

- **Local governments are responsible for:**
  - Education and outreach to the community
  - Education and outreach to state, regional, federal decision-makers and industry
  - Negotiation on behalf of the potential host community
  - Protection of public and environmental health and safety
  - Securing a viable economic future
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Defining Consent

- Consent agreements must be:
  - Negotiated and reached between local, state and federal governments
  - Legally enforceable
  - Reflect the terms and conditions under which a community will host a facility
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What to Include in a Consent Agreement

- **S.1240 lists conditions for negotiation:**
  - Financial compensation and incentives
  - Economic development assistance
  - Operational limitations or requirements
  - Regulatory oversight authority
  - Enforceable deadline for removing waste from storage facility
What to Include in a Consent Agreement

ECA recommends:

- Volume limitations
- Linking storage and disposal
- Amending existing agreements/statutory prohibitions
- Enforceable milestones
- Penalties for failure to meet obligations
- Triggers for termination
- Indemnification for communities, states and tribes
- Opportunities for future nuclear missions
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*Lessons Learned from WIPP*

- Recognized national need
- Existence of a “clear” benefit for citizens of the state and local jurisdiction in which the repository is sited
- Solid local support
- Competent technical oversight by the State of New Mexico
- Intense and early outreach
- Rigorous quality assurance from the earliest stages of the project such as traceability, transparency and independent review
- Credibility
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Lessons Learned from Yucca

- Local governments and state governments need to work together
- Local government and community support alone will not lead to successful siting – support from the state government is necessary
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Next Steps at Local Level

Once resources and funding are provided:
- Begin education and outreach
- Engage in decision-making process at federal, state and tribal levels
- Hire trusted, independent experts
- Assess feasibility
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Next Steps at Federal Level

- Congress/Administration should provide resources and funding for education, outreach and feasibility studies
- Congress/Administration should work with local governments, states and tribes to define consent
- DOE should develop a list of suitable disposal mediums and indicate where they exist (salt, granite, etc.) to inform feasibility studies
- DOE, NRC, EPA should develop scientifically-based health and environmental standards, model state laws and regulations to guide siting process
Questions?

Kara Colton
Director of Nuclear Energy Programs
Energy Communities Alliance
(202) 828-2439
kara.colton@energyca.org