

SOCIOECONOMIC ISSUES OF HIGH-LEVEL WASTE REPOSITORIES  
PANEL RESPONSE

ABSTRACT

Following the formal paper presentations, four panelists, each representing a potential host state, commented in response to the papers. The following summarizes those panel responses.

SUMMARY RESPONSE TO PRESENTATIONS

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Thank you for the opportunity to present my thoughts on the socioeconomic issues of High Level Waste Disposal. I must admit that I was very surprised that I was asked to serve on this panel, as I am not a social specialist nor an economist, but as I look at the makeup of the panel I noted that my colleagues here have backgrounds that I believe are in areas other than that of socioeconomics. There is one thing that I do believe we, the state people, all have in common - all of us sit on the front lines of our respective states, serving as the focus of contact between the Department of Energy and the citizens of our states. In that role, all of us from time to time are required to be involved with the socioeconomic concerns of our citizens. From state to state many of the socioeconomic concerns are much the same. All of us have heard the issues raised "what is going to happen to me, my family and my land?" and "can we be assured that this thing is going to be safe?" It appears to me that those two questions are the ones that the Department of Energy has the toughest time answering or attempting to respond to may be a more appropriate way of saying it. One of the more convenient responses is "we can't be sure until we know more about the site." That type response has caused DOE more problems than they will ever know and until the answers are forthcoming the department is going to continue to have trouble.

With those preliminary remarks I would now like to respond to several of the papers heard during this session. The first is "Estimating and Coping with Public Response to Radioactive Waste Repository Siting." Ms. Payne has presented a very good strategy for developing and establishing a positive relationship with the public regarding the siting of the SECOND repository. Unfortunately, there is a rather grim history of interaction with the public in the states being considered for the first repository. The interaction strategy to date has been perceived as anything but "honest and straightforward." In the State of Mississippi the interaction strategy has been perceived as a slick PR job. To be sure, that strategy has not met with an overwhelming success but rather was doomed to failure from the outset.

One factor that was conspicuous in its absence from Ms. Payne's presentation was recognition of the social and cultural differences from region to region. For example, it does not appear to be well understood that in the South many of the most influential people are not the formal, institutional leaders. In terms of public participation and activism, the historical civil rights struggles have had a significant impact on the nature and character of the people from the South. The community and extended family networks may well be the primary means of developing attitudes and perceptions. Those networks are difficult for "outsiders" to identify and recognize, yet they are very strong forces in the rural Southern community.

While Southerners share the national mistrust of strangers, Southern traditions of hospitality and mannerisms are frequently perceived as an "acceptance" by strangers where the "acceptance" does not really exist.

There is a legitimate question of whether standard, "canned" socioeconomic impact assessments are applicable to the first, particularly if any, permanent high level waste and spent fuel facility. The key here is the idea of permanence. I believe that when all the facts are in, it will be found that many impacts will continue to occur after closure of the facility. These impacts are likely to affect area development and possible human intrusion.

Ms. Payne pointed out that interaction and response comes from groups and individuals. In our case, full community response to the issue of the Richton salt dome becoming a repository has been in evidence for years. True, there are individuals and organizations who serve as the focal point of interaction; however, on the overall issue of siting a repository in Perry County, the entire community has expressed its stoic opposition. The organizations to which Ms. Payne has made reference already exist in those states under consideration for the first repository. They have been effective to say the least. To give an example of how effective the local organization has been, in the fall of 1981, a nuclear waste forum was held on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Over 5,000 persons attended that meeting. No other meeting whose subject was that of nuclear waste management has been so heavily attended. Not only are the citizen groups working well within their own ranks, but now we are also seeing where the organizations are interacting with each other, exchanging information and ideas on the common cause issues. It appears that

interaction between the federal government and these organizations has been unsuccessful.

For those states that have been included since the mid 1970's, many impacts have already been felt and have gone unresponded to by DOE. Many of the citizens who have been impacted by past activities, may have been irreversibly damaged. Only a bona fide socioeconomic impact assessment will bear out the answer.

The Department has floundered with developing a successful public interaction program for the states being considered for the first repository. The seven years of experience with the first repository states should rank highly on the "lessons learned" list as to how DOE will attempt to interact with the second repository states.

My next comments are directed toward the presentation on the socioeconomic impacts at the WIPP site. In preparing for this presentation, I did some research on the University of New Mexico studies, and the reports of the Southwest Research and Information Center. There seems to be some incompatibilities between the conclusions drawn from the various studies. For example, the UNM study concludes that costs to the state would be approximately \$119 million in lost wages and \$46 million in taxes from foreclosed mineral production and \$76.8 million for emergency preparedness, equipment and training at hospitals and for emergency preparedness teams. According to published information, during the SPDR program, unemployment in Eddy and Lea counties actually increased from 1981-1982 from 5.5% to 9% and 2.6% to 4.4%, respectively.

Reference was made in the WIPP presentation to the socioeconomic factors in the WIPP Final Environmental Statement. That report has been severely criticized by those most familiar with the socioeconomic situations in the state. FEIS socioeconomic study looks strictly at local impacts while the University of New Mexico has concentrated on the statewide socioeconomic impacts. The FEIS population/employment estimates are generated from input-output analysis using the implicit assumption that capital and labor use remain in constant proportion as economic activity levels change. The last point on the WIPP status report I would like to note is the absence of any mention of long-term monitoring of mitigation measures. It appears to me that a mitigation program cannot be cast in bonze ad infinitum but rather should be closely monitored and adjustments made as determined appropriate.

I have a few comments on the presentation made by Ms. Pendleton. My first is that she is precisely on target when she points out that credibility is the most crucial part of developing a viable public interaction process. I could cite any number of instances where representations have been made by a DOE spokesman and these representations prove to be erroneous. More often than not, due to actions or decisions made by the superiors of the DOE spokesman. To elaborate on the point, Ms. Pendleton touched on one of the most crucial elements of the interaction process - the element is personal fallibility. Unfortunately, most of the spokesmen from DOE and its contractors are uncomfortable with having to admit that they don't know the answer to a question issued by a member of the public.

There is one additional point that I would like to offer that Michaelene did not directly address. In my state we have experienced a phenomenon that I shall call "Here today and gone Tomorrow." To explain, any number of meetings and hearings have been held in Perry County, Mississippi. What is curious about the *situation* is that the entourage of DOE/contractor representative present at a given meeting seem never to show up for subsequent meetings. Admittedly, the shock of the meetings may have an impact on exacting a toll on DOE employees; however, I don't see that to be the case. The other side of that coin is the issue of authority of the spokesman. One of the most serious problems that we experienced during an information exchange in December, 1983, was that no one in a position of decision-making authority was present to interact with the public. Prior to 1980, the manager of the Columbus Program Office of DOE was present at several public meetings. He was also present at three public hearings regarding the nomination of the two Perry County salt domes. At the hearings he was not able to directly interact with the public. I do believe that DOE could improve its credibility by having one or more of its decision-makers, including those persons in policy-making positions make themselves available and accountable to the public. Given the past failures to effectively interact with the public, DOE would be well advised to assess its program of state interaction. As a final comment on Ms. Pendleton's paper and as one who also has been in the trenches, in my case for almost four years, those representative of the Department of Energy and its contractors should take immediate heed to her comments. She's right on target and with her open candor, and succinctness, I expect that she'll be around for as long a time as a decision on a repository is rendered regarding the State of Utah.

My final comments are in response to the Battelle paper on "Impact Analysis and Community Development Need at The Salt Site." When I read the title of the paper I had immediate concern to the extent that I asked "what do they know that I don't?" I don't believe a decision has been rendered on whether there will be a salt site or the salt sites and I can assure you that the sites are substantially different with respect to socioeconomic issues.

The most basic comment that I have about the presentation is that Battelle has made the assumption that all impacts are mitigable. I most totally disagree with that philosophy. The salt sites in Mississippi are different from each other not to speak of their differences with respect to the salt sites in Texas and Utah. The paper fails to acknowledge and recognize social and cultural differences between these sites. Those differences will have an impact on what methodologies are to be used in attempting to identify and assess impacts and then to attempt to effect a mitigation program. Those differences will dictate the types of participant/observer interviews, surveys and impact planning to be utilized at any given site.

Generally speaking, the current data base is composed of secondary, not primary data. The lack of primary data for the salt sites is going to cause trouble with the EA's and controversy, at least, with regard to the legitimacy of the

conclusions. As a final point, most of the people involved with the development of the socioeconomic impacts and assessments for the EA's have a West and/or Mid-West flavor and as such the work being done may not be applicable to all of the seven salt sites.

Thank you, that concludes my remarks.

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At the core of the consideration of socioeconomic issues of high-level waste repositories is the matter of public response to the program, because public perceptions and attitudes will heavily influence priorities of issues and the extent to which avoidance or mitigation of expected impacts is acceptable in negotiations and interactions among interested parties. The DOE repository program is not new to citizens in any of the areas of the nine existing Potentially Acceptable sites. This somewhat diminishes the value of the insight provided by Barbara Payne's paper - not because there is anything wrong with her general findings, but because it tells DOE what it should have done rather than how to proceed from here, after some apparent irreversible damage has already been done to the relationship between DOE and the affected communities.

Both Barbara Payne's and Michaelene Pendleton's papers revolve on the need to have some positive trust in the interaction between DOE, the states, and communities involved. In my view, there is little evidence of this necessary component on the part of any of the players at any level of interaction. And, I do not foresee being able to jointly repair this defect, primarily because there is not sufficient trust anywhere to permit a unilateral first move. All parties are in a constant mode of gaining and defending territory and position, thus the real world of the first repository program is one of gamesmanship rather than mutual problem-solving.

Part of what has created the gamesmanship atmosphere stems from what I view as a misconception expressed in Barbara Payne's presentation, and one which I believe was made by the program in its early and continuing attempts at public involvement. The misconception is that individual response (which actually shapes group response) is based in part on the "proximity of the proposed site to the individual's community, home or work place." The DOE program siting process has its roots in regional geologic screening, yet its public involvement efforts have miscalculated the extent of socioeconomic and political regionality in the more rural areas of the country under investigation. This geographic regionality is not greatly related to the geologic regionality that first attracted the DOE's attention. Each of the states with sites under investigation has some broad regional socioeconomic interest upon which the program impacts (not always in a negative manner), while the DOE public involvement effort has been more one of trying to define and influence the attitudes and perceptions of the smallest bounded socioeconomic units, suggesting that interest is

assumed to decline in direct proportion to linear distance from one's "back yard." This ignores the importance of regional values, which include individual pride in regional resources, settings and accomplishments. The example of this in Texas is that the program focus of interest has narrowed to portions of two non-contiguous counties in the Texas Panhandle, out of a geographic region that is in excess of 25,000 square miles in area. The major economic interest of the region is farming and ranching of the land, and, more locally, production of oil and gas from the subsurface, yet the DOE program, until very recently did not seriously recognize the coherent regional agricultural interest and ethic, and the need to address the components of that coherence. Instead, the program seemed to play on the perceived differences in local responses in the two counties and a perception of firm isolationist attitudes. This approach has, in fact, strengthened the regional attitude by obviously ignoring some fundamental regional values and resources to the extent that many of the local people across the entire rural portion of the region are affronted. I am in doubt that this result can be reversed.

The paper presented by the ONWI group adds further to my view that the importance of regionality has been miscalculated by the DOE program. Major socioeconomic issues raised in three of the four "salt states" in the environmental assessment hearings last spring demonstrate a priority on "impact on the economic base of the surrounding area," yet the focus of program interest is conveniently institutionalized to the point that one must accept the assumption that the socioeconomic impacts will be fully manifested in the areas of local population concentration, when, in fact the mainstay of the economy is the value and wealth accumulating from the resources of the unpopulated lands.

We, as a society, have little experience in assessing the human values of unpopulated resource areas, and this lack of experience leads us to ignore that portion of the equation when attempting to assess impacts of projects that are remote from population concentrations. To be quite blunt about this point - the first thing an impact analysis team looks for is the nearest town, when in rural areas, the town only exists because of activities that take place in areas outside of town. In our own analysis of anticipated socioeconomic impacts of a repository in the Texas Panhandle, we are attempting, among other things, to develop a methodology to evaluate the human values "out-of-town" that support the regional economic base.

While the siting guidance in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act is sensitive to the human values of, at least, some natural resources, the assistance provisions are, in general, a reflection of the myopia discussed above. We, in Texas, will attempt to bring a broader view to any written agreement with the DOE regarding the repository program, and expect to be granted liberty to explore, through negotiation, the real bounds of socioeconomic impacts that can accompany a high-level nuclear waste repository investigation or development in our state, should a Texas site be selected for site characterization.

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It should be stated from the outset that all of the papers were very well thought out and prepared and were a pleasure to review.

The NWPA paper (Haymore and Shaw) provides a valuable review of many of the yet to be resolved problems concerning the financial assistance provisions of NWPA. Specifically, the authors point out the problems of 1) the uncertainties surrounding the payment of special purpose district taxes and charges, and 2) payments only to communities in which the repository is approved (pg. 3, par. 1). Both of these problems, if unresolved, have the potential of diluting many of the positive aspects of GILOT. The authors have, however, failed to note that GILOT may prove ineffective in situations, like Louisiana, where the virtual non-existence of a viable ad valorem tax base (or extremely underassessed tax base) will probably undermine the entire GILOT concept, as currently designed. Overall, this paper asks numerous pertinent questions and is quite useful to the state and local officials who will someday have to negotiate grant agreements.

The second paper, "Impact Analysis and Community Development Needs at the Salt Sites," is a good, solid paper which outlines DOE's current direction concerning socioeconomic issues. Two additional areas should be considered, 1) an emphasis on the development of local or regional service standards rather than a reliance on national standards (pg. 2, final paragraph), and 2) a generic discussion of risk related factors and public perception of risks associated with nuclear waste repository siting and appropriate mitigative strategies.

The WIPP paper (Little, Hohmann, and Adcock) is another solid, state-of-the-project review. Unfortunately, my years in state government have made me somewhat cynical and I therefore would have appreciated a little insight into some of the problems experienced at WIPP and methods used to solve these problems. If things are truly as rosy as this paper illustrates, then congratulations to New Mexico!

My primary comment on the fourth paper involves the following question: Why was the title of this paper changed from "...coping with public resistance..." to "...coping with public response...?" I humorously envision Ms. Payne receiving a call from DOE-HQ requesting the change in order to not antagonize the state participants!

I do question the statement that "the issues and forms of individual response are based on ...3) proximity of the proposed site to the individual community..."(pg. 2, par. 4). Though I agree that the frequency of expression of this response may be influenced by the distance from the site, I feel that the level of response intensity reaches a plateau rather than decreasing with increased distance from the site as is implied here.

Finally, this paper closes with one of the most important statements of this session, "...one policy should predominate: straightforward, honest responses from all evaluators and decision makers..."(Pg. 4, par. 3).

My response to the paper by Ms. Pendleton, "Two years on the Front Line," is in the words of Rex Reed, "a truly delightful and entertaining paper!" I cannot commend the author enough for her insight and ability to effectively communicate that insight to the reader. This "down to earth" analysis should become required reading for all DOE engineers and contractors before they attend their next public information meeting.

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First I'd like to say that Michaelene's paper was right on target and I see that there are several local Nevada residents in the audience. I'll focus my remarks on issues that have yet to be discussed in depth and our philosophical approach to the issues. First, however, some background on the state organization and structure.

It's important to be aware of the governor's position to veto a site in Nevada. This veto is based on the state's historical commitment to below and above ground weapons testing and that Nevada hosted one of the nation's three low level facilities for over 20 years. We are no strangers in the nuclear arena. Transportation issues are also a primary concern and we believe that a site closer to generators and current storage locations will minimize the risk to the public.

The Governor created the Nuclear Waste Project Office in December last year because of a growing concern about the potential for Nevada's involvement. A governor's veto is certainly going to have to be supported with sound scientific and technical data and we are working to that end.

The state has involved all branches and local governments in its program. We have a legislative study committee and funds are provided to local governments for planning and coordination; this is an essential segment of our program. The structure and organization of the state program demonstrates the active involvement of the legislature and local governments in socioeconomic issues, in scoping, collection and analysis of local baseline data, and assisting the state in conducting studies.

The state's philosophical approach to assessing these issues includes:

- active participation of all affected entities
- that the federal government is responsible for the full costs of all impacts, including impacts during characterization

- we are going to conduct a very broad and thorough examination of all important issues and through this approach hope to force DOE to examine issues from a broader perspective
- in addition to the traditional community service impacts, we intend to examine statewide issues such as risk assessment, impact on tourism, the impact on the ability to attract new non-nuclear industry to the state and, of course, transportation impacts.
- finally, our approach to this assessment will include an examination of the types and magnitude of compensation that Nevada should receive should the site be selected over our objections.

A point of clarification, we need to determine mitigation as directly related to impacts and compensation for forced acceptance.

Transportation is a paramount concern by all parties in Nevada. Although DOE and others believe the issue has been put to rest, let me assure you that Nevada and other states are going to force a re-examination of the entire issue, from costs to alternative route construction. I did note Michael Lawrence's remark yesterday to reopen the issue.

DOE needs to begin recognizing that the transportation issue is going to take many years to examine and develop and the state and public are concerned that virtually nothing is going on at the federal level in this area.

We believe that in addition to the focus on the national level, the transportation issue needs to be examined at the regional and local levels. Nevada, Utah, and Washington, through the Western State Energy Board, will initiate analysis of the regional transportation issue. With the support of non-host states that belong to the Western Energy Board, we hope to analyze and make recommendations on these transportation issues from a western regional perspective.

In demonstrating this region-wide concern for transportation, I hope that DOE will soon begin freeing up the data on regional transportation route scenarios and other data that they have already developed, but are unwilling to share at this point. It is critical that the states and public know what preliminary planning has already gone on.

The Nevada legislature and Nevada local government entities are equally concerned about obtaining Nevada specific transportation data. These concerns fall into three areas:

- concern for public health and safety
- socioeconomic impacts of transportation and avoidance of routes through major metropolitan areas (e.g., Las Vegas) by constructing new major highways or rail lines dedicated for this purpose
- the development and negotiation of methods to levy fees on shipments as compensation.

DOE ought not wait until the development of the Environmental Impact Statement to show its hand on routes and other strategies. These data and analyses should be contained in the Environmental Assessments so that examination and analysis can begin now.

Lastly, I would like to conclude these remarks with mention of an issue that hasn't been discussed here today and one that will begin receiving greater attention. Should the Nevada site be selected over our objections, we believe that DOE has a moral and ethical obligation to begin developing an infrastructure with the state that could provide the bulk of the labor and materials from within the state. From the establishment of a Robotics Institute to dollars for local labor training programs to the subsidization of the development of in-state manufacturing facilities and other types of assistance to attract new industry to the state. Nevada believes that if a state should have to accept a facility such as this, then this type of infrastructure development by the federal government is essential.

As I mentioned at the outset, the Governor has said he will exercise his veto if Nevada is selected. However, should Nevada be selected in spite of these objections, let me assure you that the cost of doing business in Nevada will be high.