

ACHIEVING LOCAL SUPPORT FOR A LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITY IN ILLINOIS

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ABSTRACT

The State of Illinois continues to make satisfactory progress toward the goal of having a new low-level radioactive waste (LLW) disposal facility in operation by the federally mandated milestone of January 1, 1993. To accomplish this task, Illinois has adopted a voluntary siting process.

The voluntary siting process will be successful by definition only if a high level of local support can be achieved and sustained. A strong public participation program in conjunction with a comprehensive information and education program is essential to fostering the necessary local support. Many other elements are also needed throughout this process. The Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety (IDNS) has found that making grants to local governments, awarding scholarships for area students, enacting a comprehensive system of legislation and regulations, explaining the site identification and characterization program, describing facility design features, practicing a strong policy of buying and hiring locally, maintaining good relationships with local news media and building trust through personal relationships have all greatly contributed to support for the LLW program in the potential host communities.

Throughout the process, the Illinois LLW program has been dynamic, cooperative and responsive. Flexibility in the program is crucial in order to respond quickly and effectively to changing needs and concerns as different groups and individuals become involved in the process.

LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

In Illinois, laws and regulations have contributed a strong foundation on which local support can be built. The Illinois LLW Management Act contains provisions that the local government of jurisdiction can close the facility if by-product material as defined in Section 11e(2) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, high-level radioactive waste or hazardous waste that is not mixed waste is ever accepted for disposal. Regulations requiring complete containment of waste and radiation exposure of no more than one millirem per year at the facility boundary to any member of the general public have also been instrumental in achieving local support. Such laws and regulations provide the local communities with assurance that the disposal facility will be safely operated and regulated.

Table I provides a summary of the major provisions of the Illinois Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Act and the current status of implementation.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Public information and education efforts continue to be among the most challenging tasks that IDNS has undertaken. To provide accurate and timely information and to communicate that information effectively to diverse audiences is very difficult at times. An enormous amount of staff time and other resources are required to keep people abreast of issues and program developments. To accomplish this formidable task, IDNS has designed an imaginative and creative approach which is extremely flexible and responsive to local communities' needs and concerns.

Important elements of the LLW public information and education program include the following:

- Tours of LLW facilities, generators of LLW and IDNS facilities. Tours are the most successful educational tool. Actually seeing LLW operations

and talking with workers, local officials and nearby residents has proven to be very effective in communicating what LLW is and how it is safely managed. IDNS has sponsored about thirty tours involving over 350 local people. These people disseminate information to the community by word of mouth—a communication network that is most important in small communities.

- Project offices in the potential host communities. Project offices have been established in Fairfield (Wayne County) and Martinsville (Clark County). Informational displays, large screen televisions for videos and a full-time staff person are at each office. Staff answer questions and provide information about the status of the LLW siting project. The project offices are also used as additional community centers for meetings and even aerobics classes.
- Small group meetings of no more than forty people. Small group meetings promote the necessary give and take atmosphere for good communications. People should feel comfortable enough to ask questions in a non-threatening situation. Too often, large meetings serve as forums for opposition groups to monopolize time and as a consequence, communication suffers. Small group meetings with visual demonstrations of radiation and shielding have been effective in developing understanding. IDNS has participated in about 250 small meetings in Clark and Wayne counties alone.
- Reading rooms at local libraries. Reading rooms currently containing about 150 documents, eight videotapes and tape player/monitors have been established in Martinsville, Clark County, and in Fairfield and Wayne City, Wayne County. Grants have been provided by IDNS to the local libraries

TABLE I
 Summary of Major Provisions of the 1983 Illinois
 Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Act, as Amended.

<u>Section #</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Comment</u>
4	Generator Registration	Requires all generators to register with IDNS and to file an annual report. Registration was started in 1984. Annual reports for 1984, 1985 and 1986 have been issued. The Annual Report for 1987 is scheduled for release in the summer of 1989.
5	Requirements for Waste Facility Contractors	Rules governing the selection of a contractor to design, develop, and operate LLW disposal facilities were adopted in January, 1988. Westinghouse has been selected to develop and operate the disposal facility.
6	Requirements for Waste Facilities	Regulations for design, construction, operation, maintenance, and monitoring of LLW disposal facilities were adopted in February, 1988.
7	Requirements for Waste Treatment	Requires IDNS to promulgate LLW treatment standards. Planned for 1989.
9	Requirements for Waste Transporters	Requires IDNS to issue permits to anyone transporting LLW to a facility in Illinois; also requires development of a manifest document and a tracking system. Tracking system is under development and will be operational before the disposal facility is completed in 1992.
10	Requirements for Waste Facility Siting	Establishes timetable and process for site selection, environmental studies and site characterization, public hearings, funds for counties to conduct siting reviews. Studies with the Illinois State Geological Survey and the Illinois State Water Survey began in 1984 and were completed in early 1988. Alternative sites for characterization were identified in 1988. Two alternative sites were identified near Martinsville in Clark County and two alternative sites were identified in Wayne County.
11	Requirements for Interim Waste Management	IDNS issued an <u>Interim Management Plan</u> in November, 1985.
12	Waste Facility Siting Criteria	Criteria were adopted in 1988.
13	Waste Fees	Requires generators to pay fees to the state. Collection began in 1984. Current annual fees are (1) \$1,148,000 per nuclear reactor for utilities, and (2) \$3 per cubic foot or \$50, whichever is greater, for all other generators. Fee schedule for disposal facility must be submitted at least one year before facility begins to operate.
14	Waste Management Funds	Fees are placed into two funds: facility development or longterm care. Established in 1984.
15	Compensation	Requires IDNS to promulgate rules for compensating persons suffering loss by a radioactive release from a facility. These will be adopted prior to operation of the disposal facility.
19	Agreement State Status	Agreement State status was achieved in June, 1987.

to maintain these documents. In addition to reading rooms, IDNS has distributed about 150,000 informational brochures and packets of information.

- Teaching science classes in the local high schools. Three local high schools have taken advantage of a four day course in basic radiation principles and radiation protection for their physics, chemistry and biology classes. Two more schools have scheduled courses for the near future. These classes have proven to be a very successful method of increasing the understanding of radiation by students and their parents. One local television station described it in an upbeat news story as the fourth "R" for "Reading, 'Riting, 'Rithmetic and Radiation." Lectures/demonstrations supplemented by tours of IDNS's mobile laboratory, also serve to demonstrate levels of IDNS's capability. IDNS is working on a teacher workshop that will develop a high school curriculum on radiation-related topics.
- Participation in local fairs and events. Staff have routinely attended fairs, barbecues, open houses and 4-H events. Informational booths and models (including full-size Westinghouse SUREPAKs) have been made available to provide local citizens with accurate information.
- Production of videotapes and newsletters. Seven videotapes have been produced by IDNS that describe topics such as what LLW is, site selection studies and community attitudes toward hosting a LLW disposal facility. Videotapes are useful in meetings and can be effective on local educational television channels. IDNS publishes a newsletter called "The Illinois Approach" that describes aspects of the LLW program and progress to date. A special edition of "The Illinois Approach" was published as an insert in the local newspapers.
- Toll free telephone lines. IDNS has established two toll free phone lines. One serves local officials and members of the news media and the other serves members of the general public.
- Scholarships for local students. IDNS sponsored two full four-year scholarships beginning in the Fall of 1988. One scholarship was awarded to Trevor McCoy of Martinsville and the other was awarded to Anh Hua of Fairfield. These scholarships include tuition, room and board, books and miscellaneous expenses.

To keep community interest in the program at a substantial level, IDNS is considering several new informational and educational activities:

- A transportation exhibit. Transportation vans, casks, packages and trained drivers will be available in the local community to help explain the precautions taken for transporting low-level radioactive waste. Texas held a similar exhibit and found it to be very successful in informing the public about transportation procedures and safety.

IDNS, learning from the Texas experience, is planning to sponsor this exhibit in 1989.

- A "Sister City" program. The community chosen to host the LLW disposal facility may want to share its experiences with other communities with related facilities. To facilitate this information exchange, IDNS will assist the host community in establishing a "sister city" relationship with other communities in other parts of the country and world.
- A multiple image slide show. Although IDNS has found that educational videos are helpful, they are expensive and cannot be readily updated. To fill this need, a multiple image slide show is being developed. This slide presentation will be flexible enough to be regularly updated as the LLW program moves forward.
- A Career Day. IDNS will sponsor a Career Day so that citizens and students in the host community can plan their training and education to take advantage of career opportunities at the LLW disposal facility. The ability to train and get a job at the facility is extremely important to the local community and a Career Day will assist in fulfilling that potential.

The Illinois LLW program uses a multifaceted approach to public information and education. IDNS has found this approach to be necessary in addressing the needs, concerns and advice of different local interest groups and citizens. The important point is to remain flexible and creative, so that changing needs can continue to be met in a timely manner.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

The LLW issue generates intense interest from many different groups and individuals. As one local official put it, "Nothing has been talked about more since World War II!" People rightly demand an active role in decisions that affect them. The Illinois LLW program recognizes this right and provides many opportunities for local citizens to participate actively in the process.

Each of the potential host communities has formed a group of local citizens to study the LLW issue and provide advice to the local government with jurisdiction. Martinsville City Council appointed the Citizens' Advisory Committee which includes people living within or near the alternative site, business people, a liaison to the City Council and other area citizens. The Wayne County Board appointed the Citizens' Review Committee which includes a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, a liaison from the County Board, a petroleum geologist and other area citizens. Each of these committees meets regularly to discuss and research various aspects of the LLW issue. These local groups also regularly meet with a statewide Citizens' Advisory Group. Interactions with these other groups helps to broaden the viewpoints, so that many different courses of action can be considered. The local Citizens' Advisory/Review Committees have helped to facilitate information exchange and have

helped to identify areas that require further thought and planning.

GRANTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Grants to local governments have proved to be a valuable element in achieving local support for the idea of hosting a LLW disposal facility. There are four basic types of grants available to the local Illinois communities near each alternative site:

- \$50,000 restricted grants from IDNS. These grants must be used to review the LLW disposal facility siting process. This money may be used for such things as hiring legal help or independent consultants and funding citizen committees.
- \$100,000 restricted grants from the Central Midwest Compact Commission. These grants may be used to assess the social and economic impacts that hosting a LLW disposal facility might have on the community or other related LLW siting topics.
- \$200,000 unrestricted grants from IDNS. These grants may be used by the local government for any legal purpose.
- Grants for specific use from IDNS. Grants to local libraries and community centers have been made directly by IDNS to the appropriate governmental body.

Martinsville City Council has received grants totalling over \$550,000. Of this amount, \$400,000 is for unrestricted use. This grant money has been used to improve city water wells, contribute to the local schools and surrounding townships, purchase new roll-up doors and equipment for the fire department, buy additional buildings and property, supply police and emergency medical technicians with new communications equipment, purchase a city computer system, fund economic development activities, complete the restoration of a one room schoolhouse museum and provide for charitable programs such as Meals on Wheels. The restricted grants have been used to hire consultants and legal staff for the city and landowners living in the alternative sites being characterized. Martinsville is eligible for an additional \$50,000 grant from IDNS and an additional \$100,000 grant from the Central Midwest Compact Commission.

The Wayne County Board has also received grants of over \$550,000. The unrestricted grants have been used mainly to improve roads throughout the county. The restricted grants have been used to fund activities of the Citizens' Review Committee and the Fairfield Area Economic Development Commission. Wayne County is also eligible for additional grants totalling \$150,000 from IDNS and the Central Midwest Compact Commission.

Throughout the process, grants will be available to local governments. The unrestricted grant of \$200,000 is available each year for each alternative site being characterized. When the final site is selected, an unrestricted grant of

\$800,000 per year will be available until the LLW disposal facility begins operation.

USING LOCAL RESOURCES

The use of local resources in all phases of the LLW disposal facility siting process has been a top priority for IDNS and its contractors. Local people know when their goods and services are being used. They appreciate this economic benefit and the demonstration of the Department's interest in the community.

Battelle and Westinghouse have hired staff in both Martinsville and Wayne County. The project offices, field offices, storage facilities and meteorological towers were all constructed or remodelled using local contractors and supplies. LLW project personnel stay at local motels and eat in local restaurants. Printing of reports for the LLW project is now done primarily at either a Martinsville or Fairfield print shop. Local photographic services are used to document important events in the LLW program. Local labor was used to the extent possible throughout the site characterization program. Local newspaper subscriptions are sent to people interested in the LLW issue across the country and educational ads are placed in those papers.

The Central Midwest Compact Commission contributes to the use of local resources by investing Commission funds in local banks. In addition, when the final site is selected, the long term care fund will be invested locally to the extent possible.

The policy of purchasing local goods and services and hiring locally is one of the most visible demonstrations that the local community is not being taken for granted. In Martinsville and Wayne County, the work ethic is very strong. People are not looking for handouts, but they want jobs. Long term employment and service opportunities are a top priority for these communities and a strong policy of using local resources beginning now and continuing throughout the operation of the LLW disposal facility is vital to achieving local support of the LLW project.

BUILDING TRUST

One of the most common sentiments that IDNS staff have heard is that government cannot be trusted. Indeed, trust of organizations generally is not widespread. Rather, trust is something that must be established between individual people over a substantial period of time.

Good personal working relationships must be established with individual local officials, landowners, opinion leaders and news media reporters and editors. Each of these relationships requires openness, honesty and accessibility. Good working relationships are crucial to good communications and mutual *understanding*.

IDNS and contractor staff have found that good working relationships with local people have sometimes developed into genuine friendships. Some individuals have travelled the 2-3 hours it takes to get to Martinsville or Wayne County on their own time over weekends just to attend a special local event and be with friends. Certainly good working relationships and friendships contribute

heavily to the atmosphere of trust that is essential in achieving local support for any controversial project.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that there is a broad range of elements that contribute to achieving local support for a LLW disposal facility and allowing the voluntary process to work in Illinois. IDNS has found that a comprehensive system of laws and regulations, a multifaceted approach to communicating information to the public, opportunities for local citizens to participate in the process productively, a grant system for independent study and community improvements, the extensive use of local resources and the establishment of good personal working relationships have all been helpful in achieving local support in the potential host communities.

Trust and communications are clearly the most difficult aspects of gaining support in a community. IDNS has tried to minimize the number of situations in which a community

would have to exercise trust. Grants may be used for independent study and analysis. Personal working relationships and friendships have contributed positively to building trust. Accurate and timely communications that address community concerns and feelings also help to establish a trusting relationship. IDNS and its contractors have been fortunate to have good communicators on staff. But, communications are never easy. A major mistake or misstatement can destroy a fragile trust relationship quickly. It is most important to remain open, flexible, creative and able to respond quickly to meet changing needs and different concerns. The Illinois LLW program has been successful in achieving a high level of local support for a LLW disposal facility with this approach thus far and, with continued hard work and creativity, will successfully locate, build and operate the LLW disposal facility in a volunteer community early in 1992-a year ahead of the federal milestone.