

# Wrong Site for N-Waste

The possibility that the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works in Lewiston might be used as a permanent regional storage site for nuclear wastes has aroused justifiable opposition in Niagara County.

Although no final decision has been made on the ultimate fate of the site—which was used in the development of the atomic bomb during World War II—it appears from a U.S. Department of Energy statement that use of the site for disposal of nuclear wastes from “nearby states” is one of the options under consideration. The other options, according to energy officials, range from the complete decontamination and “unrestricted release of the site for other uses to permanent stabilization of those radioactive wastes now on the site.”

The Lewiston site reportedly contains about 16,000 tons of radioactive material, including uranium oxide and radium that have been there since 1944. The Energy Department

said that remedial work performed at the site since 1980 was intended as corrective action to improve the storage of material already at the site.

However, Lewiston officials fear that the extensiveness and cost of the remedial work at the site suggest plans for its future use and a disposal site for additional radioactive waste.

Resistance in Lewiston to any such use has been intensified by evidence of some waste seepage from the ordnance site into the surrounding area, by the proximity of the site to the Lewiston-Porter Central School campus and by fears that radioactive wastes might get into the Niagara River and Lake Ontario.

Niagara County already is overburdened as New York State's chief dumping area for landfill disposal of hazardous toxic wastes. Its problems should not be compounded by making it a dumping ground as well for new radioactive wastes from nuclear facilities in New York and other states.

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