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# LaFalce, Senators Decry Lewiston As N-Waste Site

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WASHINGTON — Rep. John J. LaFalce, D-Town of Tonawanda, and the state's two U.S. senators Wednesday urged the federal Department of Energy to immediately halt plans to use the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works in Lewiston as a site for disposal of more low-level radioactive materials.

The Lewiston facility now contains 16,000 tons of byproducts from the World War II Manhattan Project to make an atomic bomb. Among the wastes stored there is half the world's known supply of radium.

An Energy Department consultant had urged that the ordnance works become a regional repository for low-level nuclear wastes stored for the last 25 years at dumps in Massachusetts, New Jersey and elsewhere in New York.

The consultant, Bechtel National Inc., said collecting the materials there would double the volume of wastes in Lewiston. But Bechtel officials told DOE that the radioactivity there would increase only 3 percent if its plans were adopted.

In a letter to outgoing Energy Secretary James B. Edwards, Rep. LaFalce and Senators Alfonse M. D'Amato, R-N.Y., and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y., SAID:

"It is time for your personal intervention in this matter ... Western New York has borne more than its fair share of the state's and the nation's hazardous and radioactive waste management burden."

A spokesman for DOE said Wednesday the agency is not yet committed to carrying out Bechtel's plan. Charles Seehorn, a DOE lawyer in Oak Ridge, Tenn., said, however, that the "recommendations are technically sound."

"How well they'll fly from a political and sociological standpoint, nobody knows," Mr. Seehorn added.

The congressmen, who have frequent contacts with DOE, were unaware of the proposal until it surfaced in press reports three weeks ago.

DOE had quietly asked Bechtel for a study nearly eight months ago and the company submitted its report to DOE last May recommend-

ing expansion of the Lewiston facility, which is 10 miles north of Niagara Falls near the Town of Porter line.

Referring to the Bechtel report, the congressmen said they learned it will be followed soon by a final report and an environmental impact statement.

"Bechtel's recommendation has generated a great deal of forward momentum within DOE and we are concerned that the recommendation will soon be issued as DOE policy," they wrote.

"We cannot allow any policy to be adopted or implemented without the full participation, understanding and concurrence of all concerned parties, especially the federal representatives for the affected site."

Lewiston town Councilman Alvin Ogg said his board has protested the proposal. Resolutions objecting to the expansion have been adopted by the Lewiston Village Board and the Niagara Falls City Council, he said.

Rep. LaFalce and Senators D'Amato and Moynihan told Secretary Edwards the Bechtel proposal represents a "sharp departure" from what DOE had previously made known about federal plans for the site.

Before this month, it had been believed that DOE — operating under a \$2.5 million appropriation — planned only remedial work to secure the materials already there.

The change in thinking about Lewiston coincided with the appointment of a new DOE contractor to manage the works. Bechtel National, a subsidiary of the influential Bechtel Corp., became the project manager Oct. 1, 1981, the beginning of the first full fiscal year of the Reagan administration.

Bechtel took over from National Lead Inc., which had planned to do the remedial work.

As it happens, the deputy energy secretary — the department's second-ranking official — is W. Kenneth Davis, a former executive in Bechtel Corp. Other Bechtel alumni in the administration include Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger and Secretary of State George P. Shultz. Energy Secretary Edwards and Deputy Secretary Davis plan to resign after the Nov. 2 election.

National Lead's project involved decontaminating and providing for permanent secure storage of the existing debris — work much smaller in scope and cost than what Bechtel is proposing. President Reagan's DOE gave the ordnance works a new name, the Niagara Falls Storage Site.

DOE lawyer Seehorn said the department's goal is to make the Lewiston facility "much safer and much more secure" than it is now.

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