

# DOE talk cheap, say foes of plan

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LEWISTON — Town officials and citizens who fought federal plans to reactivate the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works site as a radioactive waste depository are adopting a wait-and-see attitude toward the government's apparent change of heart.

"With all the lies that they've told us, I'll wait to see if they seal that site completely and move out before I believe them," Supervisor James J. Lombardi said Wednesday.

Lombardi and others maintained a letter sent by federal officials to Rep. John J. LaFalce, D-Tonawanda, was filled with double-talk. The uncertainty means local officials will go ahead with plans to ensure that Department of Energy officials do not turn the LOOW site into a regional repository for low-level radioactive wastes.

Town Board member Richard

Kolke said the news, although encouraging, should not cause a sense of complacency.

"I just don't want to get lulled into a feeling of false security," Kolke said. "But I think we can breathe somewhat easier than in the past. Maybe they're (DOE) reacting to all the public pressure that has come forth."

Board member Joan Gipp also refused to get excited over the announcement.

"I don't think it's that cut and dried," she said. "There's an awful lot of words in that letter. The terms aren't black and white enough for me."

One passage in the letter, sent from Franklin E. Coffman, DOE acting director of the office of terminal waste disposal and remedial action, read:

"We have also instructed Bechtel (National Inc.) to terminate further study of the use of the Ni-

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agara Falls Storage Site as a regional disposal site." Bechtel is the company contracted by the DOE to operate the site.

The letter further states: "The determination on future use of the site will be made after completion of the National Environmental Policy Act process."

"I don't consider it ended at all," Gipp said. "I'm not putting all of my eggs in one basket."

Steven Nathanson, spokesman for "NO LOOW," the citizens group fighting the plans, said the organization "won't let its guard down until the Town Board has a written agreement with the DOE."

"There was no reason to trust them in the past. There's no reason to trust them now," Nathanson said.

Nathanson said he received word Wednesday from a DOE official that the department dropped its plans for expansion of the site.

Nathanson said E. Lea Keller, DOE director of the technical services division, said the DOE "will no longer champion the cause for making this a regional waste disposal site."

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