

Niagara Falls nuclear waste not welcome here, DOE told

By CATHERINE FOSTER
The Department of Energy hasn't done so well managing its own wastes here in Oak Ridge, so any additional waste, from as far away as Niagara Falls, should stay where it is rather than be transported here. That was the message DOE officials heard Thursday evening during a public hearing on the draft environmental impact statement on storing Niagara Falls waste on the DOE reservation here. The hearing, held at the American Museum of Science and Energy, drew only seven speakers and an audience of about 25, and lasted less than an hour.



YAGER



MS. LUCKEY



McNALLY



YOUNG

Several of the speakers were from Roane County, where the radioactive waste dump would be located.

They complained that sufficient notice of hearings is not given in that area, and that they'd prefer that

hearings affecting Roane County be held there. William R. Bibb, DOE director of energy programs and chairman of the meeting, agreed, and after the meeting said that the planned hearing on the Central Waste Disposal Facility would be held next month in Kingston.

The issue for Thursday's hearing is permanent disposal of radioactive waste presently in Niagara Falls, site of a Manhattan Project facility. That waste is leaking into the environment, and has to be moved. DOE's options so far are to prepare more permanent facilities in Niagara Falls, or to move the waste

to either Oak Ridge or Richland, Wash.

Cost estimates indicate that it would be cheaper to leave the waste in Niagara Falls, and residents speaking at the hearing suggested that is the best option.

"I feel each region should dispose of its own waste," said State Rep. Randy McNally. "I am opposed to the transfer from the present site."

Roane County Executive Ken Yager said that a decision to move the waste to the proposed Pine Ridge Knolls site west of Oak Ridge National Laboratory would hamper industrial development efforts in the

area by turning it into a "dumping ground."

"It is the Department of Energy's stated goal that Roane County become self-sufficient to a point that it no longer would depend on DOE's financial assistance payments," Yager said. "A policy of taking the waste and dumping it in Roane County is contrary to that goal and would make it more difficult to become truly self-sufficient."

Kingston Mayor Ruby Luckey charged that "many who live here are too complacent about radioactive waste." There are too many unanswered questions, Ms. Luckey

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said, and the idea of additional waste storage here "causes alarm for most of us."

She said that, during the transfer of the waste, which would continue over two summers, a truck bearing radioactive waste would arrive in Oak Ridge every 60 seconds.

Kingston Councilman Walter L. Ford added that DOE's admitted problems with the 2.4 million pounds of mercury it can't account for are enough to try to deal with. "We have enough nuclear waste already in Oak Ridge," he said.

Mike Walker, research and budget director for Oak Ridge, said that the evidence in the draft statement indicates that the waste should be left in Niagara Falls.

Jim Young, who lives just across the river from the Oak Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant, told DOE officials, "We have enough problems here without importing any more."

In addition, he said, "The past performance of DOE in handling waste has not been good They found a stream on the reservation that's uncontaminated, so they want to pollute it."

F.L. Machinder, an Oak Ridge resident, suggested that DOE consider the new waste storage facility at the Nevada Test site. "I have one of their brochures, and they're looking for business," he said.

Susan Williams, an Anderson County resident, cited the expense and possible danger in the transportation of the waste as her reasons for opposing the location of the site here. Instead of bringing in more waste, Ms. Williams said, "DOE needs to show good faith by cleaning up this area."

Robert Peele, Roane County commissioner, echoed other comments in opposing the location in Oak Ridge.