

Remove nuclear waste from Tonawanda

How many people in Western New York realize that the U.S. Department of Energy is proposing to make the nuclear waste dump in Tonawanda permanent? We have only until Jan. 11, 1994, to object to this plan.

The radioactive waste is part of the mess made from 1942 to 1946 by the Manhattan Project, the U.S. government's secret development of the atom bomb. Now 8,000 tons of waste is buried in four places in Tonawanda; 20,000 tons of similar waste is in Niagara Falls.

About 150 people attended a Dec. 1 hearing sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy. Their slick presentation included color slides and flyers that purported to show that bicycles — yes, bicycles — are more

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dangerous than radioactive wastes such as the waste in Tonawanda.

Almost everyone who spoke at the hearing wanted the waste removed from Tonawanda for many reasons:

- It is a densely populated area, with a high rate of cancer already.

- The proposed site is very close to the Niagara River, endangering a major waterway and local plans to redevelop the waterfront.

- The proposed storage in a big pile encased in clay, in a proven earth-

quake zone, is not secure and could not be moved in the future.

- The DOE is guaranteeing only 30 years of maintenance for a problem that will last for tens of thousands of years.

- This "solution" should not be forced on the people of Tonawanda, who neither created the problem nor profited from the bomb.

The DOE admitted that there is an alternative disposal site in Utah, but it would be much cheaper to keep it in Tonawanda. The nuclear waste should be stored far from populated areas, in safe containers that can be moved again if necessary.

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