

Now is the time to deal with nuclear waste

With reference to the April 10 editorial, "Yes, state can handle waste and still save West Valley":

A 1983 book, "Nuclear Waste: Socioeconomic Dimensions of Long-term Storage," a compilation of studies, pointed out that according to technology and research at that time, the best solution to nuclear-waste storage is to store it in mined geological sites in bedded salts or salt domes. It further stated that the radioactive wastes do pose a long-term (greater than 1,000 years) hazard to human health if they are not adequately isolated.

It's very enlightening that The News differentiated between the types of low-level radioactive waste. I fully agree that the medical wastes are not our primary concern. It is the long-term, half-life waste that is the real

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problem.

The News mentions that nuclear facilities could store the waste on site for at least 10 years and says some plants are already doing that. This "solution" is just about as sensible as a homeowner saying, "I'll take the garbage out next week, next week, etc."

The only real solution to this dilemma is what is pointed out in the book — deep salt-mine disposal. Any other solution is less than desirable.

Why should we saddle future generations with the possible problems of being exposed to this same low-level

radioactive waste or have them drink water contaminated because the radioactivity leaked into the water supplies?

FUSRAP (Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program) under the Department of Energy has mentioned six cleanup alternatives. The one that makes the most sense from a human health point of view is "complete excavation with off-site disposal."

We've got to stop bickering about whose backyard (West Valley, Westchester, Oswego, etc.) we're going to put the garbage in and settle for the only positive solution.

Remember, 10 years can be like the day after tomorrow when it comes to a fiasco this big.

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