

# Voicing their displeasure

**ENVIRONMENT:** *Hundreds of residents turn out to speak against DEC hazardous waste plan.*

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YOUNGSTOWN — Enough is enough.

Those three words were repeated over and over again Thursday night at the Lewiston-Porter High School auditorium as several public officials and members of the environmental groups RRG and ROLE spoke against a Department of Environmental Conservation hazardous waste siting plan.

Blizzard-like conditions led to the cancellation of the originally scheduled meeting on March 16. At the time, RRG members said they turned away more than 300 cars made the snowy trek to Lew-Port.

The weather was a little better — so was the turnout.

By the time the meeting was set to start, at 6 p.m., more than 100 people stood in a long line waiting to get into the high school.

As things got started, more than 700 people packed the school's auditorium, with even more watching things on TV screens from the school cafeteria.

Things kicked off with Debra Aldridge of the DEC, who went over a draft generic environmental impact statement.

That was the last time anyone spoke in its favor.

"(DEC) Commissioner (Erin) Crotty, this draft plan should be an embarrassment to you and your agency," state Sen. George Maziarz said.

His speech interrupted by loud applause several times, Maziarz received a cheers and a standing ovation after turning things over to Agnello. Many of the early speakers left the podium to a boisterous standing ovation.

"I guess we're no longer the silent majority," Agnello quipped to the crowd.

While comment was intended to come from the public, the hearing started out with a long line of public officials and local environmental activists speaking, by 8:30 p.m., with a large part of the audience gone, members of ROLE still were speaking at the microphone.

"We have become the toxic sinkhole for the nation," ROLE President Tim Henderson said, before discussing the anthrax-laden desk from NBC that ended up at Chemical Waste Management in Porter.

"Albany," he said, "We have a problem."

Most of the speakers spoke



DAN CAPPELLAZZO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**HAVING THEIR SAY:** People wait to enter the Lewiston-Porter High School auditorium Thursday for a DEC hearing.

everyone on notice.

"We will no longer be the dumping ground for the state and the world."

Hoping to drum up a little two-way dialogue, Agnello invited DEC representatives to a town hall meeting scheduled for 7 p.m. June 22 at the Lew-Port auditorium.

"We will all be here," he said. "We hope that you will be here prepared to address all of the issues and concerns of this community and put 62 years of burdens to an end."

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