



Hearing on DOE waste plan crucial to town's future

Last month the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) conducted a public information meeting to explain its recommendation to permanently store low-level nuclear waste from the Manhattan Project in the Town of Tonawanda.

The Coalition Against Nuclear Waste in Tonawanda (CANIT) has taken a strong position against this DOE "solution." CANIT's position was strongly supported by the hundreds of people who attended the last public meeting on Dec. 1, 1993.

CANIT was originally formed to prevent the DOE from shipping nuclear material from Colonie to our town for permanent storage and to have the DOE remove existing low-level radioactive material at the four sites in Tonawanda to permanent out-of-state storage. We were successful, with the help of a huge public outcry, in stopping the DOE from importing waste from another community. We now need that same public outcry to stop our water-

Town Scene

Carl J. Calabrese

Town Supervisor



front from being used as a nuclear waste site.

The DOE's plan involves consolidating the four sites that currently contain contaminated material into one storage cell. The DOE estimates that building such a cell would cost \$59 million. The DOE estimates that transporting the material to a licensed facility in Clive, Utah would cost \$201 million.

CANIT has opposed this plan for many reasons. There is no scientific, engineering or technical reason why this material can not be moved to Utah. It's a matter of money. I believe that DOE has overestimated the cost of shipping and storage to Utah and underestimated the cost of constructing and maintaining a cell in Tonawanda.

We have also discovered that the total budget DOE has for these types of cleanup projects is \$2.5 billion. The DOE's own records show that it has allocated up to \$197 million for the Tonawanda project.

The Town of Tonawanda sites contain 18 percent of the total waste left from the Manhattan Project. DOE's plan to store it locally amounts to just two percent of their total budget. CANIT's call to move the material to Utah, even using the DOE's figures, amounts to only eight percent of the total cleanup budget. Taking care of 18 percent of the problem with eight percent

of the budget is certainly a reasonable trade off.

The town's waterfront should not be used for a low-level nuclear waste site. It's too close to our water supply, too close to populated areas and could be detrimental to our efforts to redevelop our waterfront.

CANIT has arranged to hold a public meeting today, Jan. 26, at Herbert Hoover School auditorium at 7 p.m. to rally community support against the storage of this waste in our town. It is crucial that the public comes out in force to convince federal officials to remove their waste to a safe, isolated desert location.

This meeting is important to our town's future. If you only attend one public meeting in your lifetime, you should attend this one. If you cannot attend but would like to express your opinion on this issue, please mail your comments to me at the Municipal Building and I will deliver them to the appropriate federal authorities.

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