

Congressional muscle seen as key to nuclear contamination removal: **Town presses for 'waste' resolution**

By Joseph C. Genco
Staff writer

Tired of the way the Department of Energy has moved forward on cleaning up radioactive waste left in the Town of Tonawanda following the Manhattan Project of World War II?

So is Town Supervisor Carl Calabrese. And so are plenty of other town citizens and officials.

The supervisor is pressing forward on two fronts.

• First, he is leading a petition drive to get Congressman John LaFalce, (D-Town of Tonawanda) to lobby Congress to use its powers to order the Department of Energy to remove all of the waste from the town rather than storing it permanently along the banks of the Niagara River.

• Second, he is challenging the DOE's estimate of costs for total removal and disposal in Utah at a facility operated by Envirocare.

The DOE has estimated the cost of removal and off-site disposal at between \$100 to \$300 million.

Mr. Calabrese believes the figures used to calculate those costs may be as much as double or triple the actual costs.

He has written Envirocare with a series of eight questions:

• "The DOE has been using a figure of \$200/cubic yard to dispose of the contaminated soil. Is this figure accurate and how is it arrived at?"

• DOE process involves rail cars and trucks. Is it possible to ship our waste to Envirocare using trains only? Would this reduce the cost, and by what amount?

• Does Envirocare have the capacity to handle the Town of Tonawanda's Waste?

• Has Envirocare received FUSRAP waste from any other community in the United States? If yes, what communities and in what amounts? What prompted DOE to ship waste to Envirocare?

• How do customers other than the US Government ship waste to your facility? What differences exist in the shipping process, and is there a difference in cost per cubic yard?

• Given the fact DOE has FUSRAP sites nationwide, would Envirocare be willing to entertain large volume discounts for storing FUSRAP waste in exchange for long-term commitment to use the Envirocare facility for disposal of all or most of its waste?

• Are there safe and accepted methods within your industry to ship large volumes of this type of waste that can reduce the cost without compromising safety?

• The Town of Tonawanda has approximately 350,000 cubic yards of FUSRAP waste. If the DOE decided to ship to Envirocare, over what period of time could this material be sent to Envirocare.

The DOE continues to work with citizens and schedule meetings attempting to find a mutually satisfying resolution to the dispute. A meeting was held Tuesday night by the DOE to discuss criteria for the clean-up of the waste.

The DOE previously reached the conclusion partial excavation and on-site disposal was the best alternative.