

F.A.C.T.S. wants site as clean as possible

As director of F.A.C.T.S. (For A Clean Tonawanda Site), I would like to clarify the group's position relative to the cleanup at the Tonawanda Site. F.A.C.T.S. never said that it wanted more study done.

Our main contentions are that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has jurisdiction over, and expertise with respect to, the radioactive material at the FUSRAP Tonawanda Site.

The commission standards for cleanup of radioactive wastes are much more protective of human health and the environment than the standards that have been identified as applicable, first by the Department of Energy and then by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The failure of the DOE and the corps to consider these standards or seek comment from the commission is a

violation of the National Environmental Policy Act, which also allows a stakeholder to go to federal court to enforce its provisions.

After 10 years of representing to the public that the selection of the remedial actions at the FUSRAP Tonawanda Site would be subject to environmental review under the policy act, the DOE and the corps decided to perform the cleanup exclusively under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act.

This act contains a provision that prohibits the federal courts from hearing a challenge to a selected cleanup until after the cleanup is complete. F.A.C.T.S. believes the corps and the DOE made, this decision in order to avoid the public review and comment procedures.

We note that both F.A.C.T.S. and CANIT (Coalition Against Nuclear Materials in Tonawanda) have the same goal. But the divergence of opinions occurs because of F.A.C.T.S.' request that the site be cleaned to unrestricted use, not just to restricted for industrial use. By not cleaning to the higher level, there could be future problems. Long-term exposure to the low-level radiation left behind could lead to the same medical problems that are prevalent among past and present workers at Linde/Praxair. The possible damage will probably not show for 20 to 30 years. And what of gene damage to young workers of childbearing age due to this exposure? Then what — come back and do the job right?

DON FINCH
Kenmore