

# Ken-Ton Bee

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## Forum set on waste

*Officials to present disapproval of plans*

by PATRICK KEYES

Local officials opposed to the proposal to keep radioactive waste at four local sites in the Town of Tonawanda are planning a public forum next week after the U.S. Department of Energy extended the public comment period on its plans for 90 days.

The original 60-day comment period on the DOE's proposal for the four radioactive sites in the town has been extended until Feb. 10 to allow for more input on the controversial plan.

Ronald E. Kirk, project director for the DOE, said the extension was authorized in Washington following a written request from the Coalition Against Nuclear Materials in Tonawanda, a watchdog group made up of local elected officials.

"Our policy is to work with the  
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community and to honor any reasonable requests for extensions in the comment period," Kirk said.

CANIT is using the added time to hold its own public information meeting at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 26 in the Herbert Hoover Middle School on Thorncliff Road.

Tonawanda Town Supervisor Carl J. Calabrese said this meeting will not be for the DOE to give its spin on the cleanup of materials at the Ashland I and II, Linde and Seaway landfill sites, but for the people of Tonawanda and their elected officials to say that they want the waste out of town.

Kirk said the DOE has not been invited to speak at the forum but will be provided with a videotape of the meeting. All comment from that session will be treated equally with previously gathered public response, he added.

The DOE has already given its recommended cleanup plan in a December public meeting. It is calling for the more than 350,000 cubic yards of contaminated soils to be stored in a newly constructed cell at one of the current sites which it would monitor. That plan is not being accepted by CANIT.

Members of that group feel the federal government should be shipping the material out of town to a site out west. At the forum, the group is expected to present budgetary figures and permit information that support their beliefs for shipping the material out of town.

The material in question is low-level radioactive waste generated in Tonawanda during the Manhattan Project in the early 1940s which led to the building of the first atomic bomb.

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