

Bee Editorial

DOE continues to ignore community plea

The United States Department of Energy continues to ignore Tonawanda's overwhelming call for nuclear waste removal.

The waste is a by-product of the Manhattan Project, the World War II effort which developed the atomic bomb.

Four sites are affected, including a landfill on River Road, the building on the Praxair factory site, and two additional River Road sites.

The DOE has proposed a \$58 million "protective solution" involving storing the waste in a cell on River Road.

This is unacceptable to a community group which has made another suggestion.

The Coalition Against Nuclear Waste In Tonawanda (CANIT) proposed moving the waste to a licensed site in Utah, 150 miles from any populated area.

The DOE insists this is not necessary, and is

attempting to continue discussing the problem.

The first step in their new process for delay was a meeting held last Tuesday to discuss and list "community values."

The "value" determined most important by those present was removal of the waste.

Tonawanda residents are tired of the DOE's attempts to bypass their resounding message. The community has voiced its stand, and will take nothing less than complete removal of toxic waste.

The DOE insists that a waste depository in Tonawanda is an equally protective solution, and the most cost-effective.

Yet, the DOE evaded questions regarding the specifications of the study, with the site manager simply stating that he believes the study is reliable.

According to a nuclear waste specialist who has gone through the DOE studies of the

Tonawanda site, the DOE is basing waste depository risk assessment on 25 hours of exposure per year.

This is completely unrealistic considering that the area concerned could likely become a public park or private homes, thereby increasing exposure levels dramatically.

Western New York has had its share of complications caused by landfills, and certainly does not need to add to that list.

With standards for radioactive safety continually rising, the Tonawanda situation must be considered intelligently.

The very idea of storing nuclear waste by a river is absurd in a day and age when scientific study is constantly revealing increasing dangers of such material.

If not for what we already know, which is conclusive enough, then for what we do not yet know, remove it.