

Concerning Town's nuclear waste:

Federal advisory unit has no reps from state, region

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Staff writer

The Department of Energy has formed its own Environmental Management Advisory Board (EMAB) to give input acceptable to the DOE on radioactive waste in the Town of Tonawanda.

There is no representation on the board from New York State or the Northeast.

The EMAB will be meeting over the next two days to discuss the future of the waste.

A public comment period is slated for 7 p.m. tonight at the Grand Island Holiday Inn, Coalition Against Nuclear Materials in Tonawanda (CANIT) officials said Monday.

CANIT had limited notice of the meeting and was scrambling on Monday to send County Legislator Charles Swanick and Town Supervisor Carl Calabrese to speak during the public comment portion of the meeting.

The DOE has not communicated with the media on the purpose of its new board and has not told CANIT much about why EMAB exists or what it hopes to accomplish.

Swanick will speak on the importance to the citizens and community of decisions concerning the waste, while Calabrese will address the economic

impact of removal and the town's long-range waterfront plans.

The four sites in questions are repositories of waste remaining from the Manhattan Project of World War II.

DOE last month announced a plan to spend \$14 million to remove waste and decontaminate buildings at the Linde-Praxair facility, but has not announced whether that work will be done to the criteria of the federal government or that of New York State.

New York State's criteria is about 10 times more stringent.

CANIT officials are a bit miffed about the actions of EMAB.

"They let us know they are coming here, but they do not ask or offer any chance to comment," said Mike Raab, deputy commissioner of the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning. Raab was running the meeting.

DOE formed an EMAB with some of the same members — including Chairman John Applegate of the University of Cincinnati School of Law, and decided to consolidate and store waste in Ohio at a different location within the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program according to citizen activist Jim Rauch.