Energy Communities Alliance

Local Governments and the Future of Nuclear Waste Management and Disposal

Kara Colton
Director of Nuclear Energy Programs
Energy Communities Alliance
NCSL Legislative Summit: Nuclear Waste Update

August 13, 2013
Energy Communities Alliance

ECA is the national, non-profit organization of local governments adjacent to and impacted by DOE nuclear activities

- Home to federally-owned and operated nuclear facilities
- Decades of experience working with DOE, Congress and states
- Potential hosts for new nuclear facilities (nuclear waste storage, nuclear waste disposal and nuclear power production)
Defense HLW and SNF in Storage in the U.S.
Energy Communities Alliance

Current Efforts to Address Nuclear Waste Management

**Positives**

- The Administration has a strategy
- Public comment considered in Senate legislation (S. 1240)
- Consent-based siting process based on sound science, “meaningful collaboration with affected communities,” flexibility and transparency
- “Local, state and federal governments as equal partners”
- Affected communities to decide whether, and on what terms, the affected communities will host a nuclear facility
Energy Communities Alliance

Current Efforts to Address Nuclear Waste Management

Challenges

- Timeline/sense of urgency
- Resources for education, outreach and feasibility studies
- Defining a consent-based process
- Prioritization of government-owned/generated HLW
- Trust
- Future of Yucca Mountain
- Minimizing political influence
ECA Priorities

- Local government involvement throughout the entire decision-making process
- Engage with federal, state and tribal governments
- Funding for education and outreach
- Funding for independent technical analysis
- Disposition of government-owned/generated HLW
- Define consent-based process
- Support efforts for assured access to funding
- Impact on DOE Cleanup Program
- Timeline
Energy Communities Alliance

**Role of Local Governments**

- Local governments are responsible for:
  - Education and outreach to the community
  - Education and outreach to state, regional, federal decision-makers and industry
  - Negotiation on behalf of the potential host community
  - Protection of public and environmental health and safety
  - Securing a viable economic future
Energy Communities Alliance
Defining Consent

- Consent agreements must be:
  - Negotiated and reached between local, state and federal governments
  - Legally enforceable
  - Reflect the terms and conditions under which a community will host a facility
What to Include in a Consent Agreement

S.1240 lists conditions for negotiation:
- Financial compensation and incentives
- Economic development assistance
- Operational limitations or requirements
- Regulatory oversight authority
- Enforceable deadline for removing waste from storage facility
Energy Communities Alliance
What to Include in a Consent Agreement

ECA recommends:
- Volume limitations
- Linking storage and disposal
- Amending existing agreements/statutory prohibitions
- Enforceable milestones
- Penalties for failure to meet obligations
- Triggers for termination
- Indemnification for communities, states and tribes
- Opportunities for future nuclear missions
Energy Communities Alliance

Lessons Learned from WIPP

- Recognized national need
- Existence of a “clear” benefit for citizens of the state and local jurisdiction in which the repository is sited
- Solid local support
- Competent technical oversight by the State of New Mexico
- Intense and early outreach
- Rigorous quality assurance from the earliest stages of the project such as traceability, transparency and independent review
- Credibility
Energy Communities Alliance

Lessons Learned from Yucca

- Local governments and state governments need to work together
- Local government and community support alone will not lead to successful siting – **support from the state government is necessary**
Energy Communities Alliance

Next Steps at Local Level

Once resources and funding are provided:

- Begin education and outreach
- Engage in decision-making process at federal, state and tribal levels
- Hire trusted, independent experts
- Assess feasibility
Energy Communities Alliance

Next Steps at Federal Level

- Congress/Administration should provide resources and funding for education, outreach and feasibility studies
- Congress/Administration should work with local governments, states and tribes to define consent
- DOE should develop a list of suitable disposal mediums and indicate where they exist (salt, granite, etc.) to inform feasibility studies
- DOE, NRC, EPA should develop scientifically-based health and environmental standards, model state laws and regulations to guide siting process
Questions?

Kara Colton  
Director of Nuclear Energy Programs  
Energy Communities Alliance  
(202) 828-2439  
kara.colton@energyca.org