



Event: Regional Workshop on the Draft Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future

Date and Time of Workshop: Friday, October 28, 2011; 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location: Radisson Plaza Hotel, 35 South Seventh Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Sponsor/Host: The Council of State Government's Midwestern Office

Mayor Dennis Egan's Remarks to the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future.

Introduction:

- We thank the Council of State Government's Midwestern Office and the BRC for coordination today's workshop.
- Red Wing supports the BRC's mission and we thank the BRC for providing this opportunity to articulate our experiences as a host community, our perspectives on long-term waste management and our reactions to the draft report.
- The City of Red Wing is located approximately 55 miles southeast of where we sit today.
- Red Wing is a rural, agricultural and manufacturing community with a population of approximately 16,500 located along the scenic bluffs along the Mississippi River at the headwaters of Lake Pepin.
- Red Wing is host to the twin reactor Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Facility.
 - We appreciate the positive working relationship we have with the corporate representatives, the facility management team and the numerous economic and ancillary benefits the facility provides our community, surrounding areas, state and upper Midwest.
- Red Wing as well as our neighbors (PIIC) are directly impacted by facility and its storage, including on-site dry cask storage, of spent nuclear fuel ("SNF") in its fuel pool and Independent Spent Fuel Storage Facilities Installations ("ISFSI").
- Red Wing is now host to and ad hoc, de-facto, temporarily-permanent SNF repository.
 - As a result Red Wing maintains a deep interest in the work of the BRC and has followed the Commission's activities since its inception.
- Red Wing is committed to working with the Federal Government, State Government, Xcel Energy, the Prairie Island Indian Community (PIIC), other local governments, and others to see the SNF removed from our communities.



Mayor Dennis Egan's Remarks

Regional Workshop on the Draft Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future

October 28, 2011; Minneapolis, Minnesota

Page 2

Experiences as a Host Community and Perspectives on Long-Term Waste Management:

- Our community, neighbors and similarly situated communities are frustrated and becoming increasingly alarmed by the federal government's inaction in addressing its obligation to dispose of SNF under the NWPA (Nuclear Waste Policy Act). We are experiencing firsthand the legacy of the Federal Government's disregard for its own laws firsthand.
- We are extremely wary of the implications of the NRC efforts currently being expended to investigate the extension of storage of SNF on-site for a period of time measured in CENTURIES. *[NOTE: Nuclear Regulatory Chairman Jaczko has announced and the NRC is currently expending efforts associated with the Chairman's belief "that the prudent course of action is to direct the (NRC) staff to conduct further analysis and update the Waste Confidence findings to account for the possibility of additional, indefinite (onsite) storage of spent nuclear fuel" and his proposal "that the (NRC) staff be directed to prepare an update to the Waste Confidence Findings and Proposed Rule to account for storage at onsite facilities...for more than 100 years, but no more than 300 years..."¹].* The consequences of such would be costly, potentially dangerous, and subject our communities to an unacceptable level of risk. We believe that consideration or movement toward such would add billions of dollars and delay to substantively managing the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle.
- We are concerned as Red Wing, is now a temporarily-permanent repository for SNF - but was never intended to become such. We have always operated with the firm understanding that our federal government would comply with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 and dispose of the SNF in a deep geological repository consistent with the Act.² As a consequence of federal inaction, we are now hosting SNF with no identifiable plan or timeframe for its final disposition. An unintended consequence of indefinite onsite storage of SNF is that Red Wing and its neighbors (PIIC), already being challenged by the Great Recession, are being further challenged with unique health, safety, security, land-use, economic development, and transportation concerns.
 - We believe the nation must develop substantive and comprehensive plans that address the federal government's obligation to responsibly manage and dispose of SNF and support the BRC's efforts to that end.

¹ Chairman Jaczko's Supplemental Comments on SECY-09-0090 Final Update to the Commission's Waste Confidence Decision. July 22, 2010. Pages 1 and 2.

² This Act, as amended, requires the Department of Energy to begin accepting SNF and HLW by January 31, 1998.



Mayor Dennis Egan's Remarks

Regional Workshop on the Draft Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future

October 28, 2011; Minneapolis, Minnesota

Page 3

- We are deeply troubled by the current and stark reality that no civilian nuclear waste has yet been disposed of and there is still no identifiable plan for its final disposition.³
- We are further troubled by the lack of an identifiable plan for handling civilian and government owned SNF has been moved backward by 40 years or more as a result of the recent actions of the Federal Administration to withdraw the DOE license for, and defund, Yucca Mountain.⁴
 - Our trust and confidence in the federal government's commitment and competence to deliver on its obligations have eroded significantly.
 - Under its current Chairman, our trust and confidence in the authority responsible for oversight activities, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, has also been eroded (as a result of politicizing the NRC activities and the NRC's seeming conversion from a decision making methodology based on sound science and technical evidence to decision making methodology based on politics).
 - We are deeply troubled by the known and unknown costs associated with hosting a temporarily-permanent SNF repository for an indeterminate amount of time, being measured in centuries by some authorities, and how a relatively small community such as Red Wing finances the burden of hosting on-site waste without overburdening the community and negatively impacting important economic development and other long-term initiatives. This concern will be exponentially more significant after the facility's licenses expire and its contribution to the tax base ends.
 - We are also deeply troubled by the intergenerational equity and environmental justice concerns on-site storage presents and will continue to present on our children, our community and our neighbors.

Reactions to the Draft Report:

- We believe the BRC's Draft Report provides a strong foundation for addressing the significant social, political, institutional, technical and other issues as the United States moves forward in its efforts to provide a permanent solution to the significant challenges of managing the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle (i.e. high level nuclear waste and spent nuclear fuel).

³ "The Department of Energy (DOE) has not yet disposed of any civilian nuclear waste and currently has no identifiable plan for handling that responsibility." Cong. Budget Office Test., Committee on the Budget, U.S. House of Representatives. July 16, 2009.

⁴ February 2, 2010 DOE files request to suspend the Yucca Mountain license application.



Mayor Dennis Egan's Remarks

Regional Workshop on the Draft Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future

October 28, 2011; Minneapolis, Minnesota

Page 4

- We have advocated that a new quasi-government organization is warranted to oversee and implement the nation's nuclear waste management program.
 - We are encouraged by the BRC's recommendation for a new organization dedicated solely to implementing the waste management program; an organization whose central task would in part be to site, license, build and operate facilities for the final disposition of spent nuclear fuel; and the recommendation for empowering such an organization with the authority and resources to succeed.
- We have advocated throughout the BRC process that a collaborative approach is necessary and that local governments need to be consulted and actively engaged in the decision making processes regarding America's nuclear future as our communities and our local governments will be deeply impacted by such. We have advocated that community involvement and engagement in a collaborative effort is critical in the process including the development of priorities, goals, objectives, and outcomes. To promote positive outcomes, we advocated for the previous processes must move beyond simple meetings to active engagement and collaboration in the discussion of technical, political, and other issues and that the engagement and collaboration must move beyond simply holding meetings to a new approach that builds the development of trust, accountability, and openness among participants.
 - We are therefore pleased that the BRC expanded upon this consideration and clearly articulated a strong recommendation for a new adaptive, flexible and consent-based approach to future siting processes.
- We firmly believe that leaving SNF and high level waste ("HLW") scattered across the nation in more than 100 locations is not in the Nation's best interests nor does it represent an optimal solution to managing SNF. Further, we believe one or more final disposition pathways are needed - including a deep geological repository. We also believe that Yucca Mountain must not be abandoned as an alternative simply due to political considerations.
 - We were therefore pleased that the BRC recognized these concerns and provided a strong recommendation for prompt efforts to develop one or more future geological disposal facilities.
- Local governments have a responsibility to ensure that the unique health, safety, security, and socioeconomic concerns of hosting nuclear facilities and on-site storage are addressed meaningfully in the policy and decision making process. Without the ability to ensure a local community's meaningful participation in the process the policy, decision making process, and recommendations will not be understood and, therefore, less likely to succeed. As the resources necessary to facilitate a local community's participation are extremely scarce at the local level we have advocated that fiscal support is imperative in ensuring local government participation in the policy and decision making process.



Mayor Dennis Egan's Remarks

Regional Workshop on the Draft Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future

October 28, 2011; Minneapolis, Minnesota

Page 5

- We were therefore encouraged that the BRC recognized this critical issue by identifying that the NWPA's current consultation and cooperation provisions do not apply to local governments and by the BRC's recommendation that such authority be extended to also include local host governments.
- While we believe the BRC's Draft Report provides a strong foundation for addressing the significant challenges of managing the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle we believe there are opportunities for strengthening the report.
 - We believe the report could be improved by addressing "head on" the significant concerns host communities share in regard to the overburden associated with hosting permanently-temporary on-site waste facilities. Host communities have significant and important obligations to their constituents. Of particular importance to the BRC and the Nation should be the current and future concerns host communities share regarding the decommissioning of the facilities that created the waste and impact of that facility decommissioning on the local governments' ability to effectively meet the important obligations they have to their constituents - including the provision of effective public safety and other services to the public and the on-site storage facilities - without significantly overburdening the community as a result of its ad hoc repository status. As Red Wing and communities similarly situated currently are, and will remain, important components of America's only back end fuel cycle management system we strongly urge the BRC to address and make recommendations addressing these host communities concerns.
 - Given the BRC's recommendation for "prompt efforts to develop one or more geological disposal facilities" and the nearly \$15 billion already spent on Yucca Mountain, the application of this recommendation to the Yucca Mountain project may provide the best risk and cost benefits while minimizing the amount of time and expense necessary to establish a permanent disposal capacity.
 - The recommendation to immediately pursue one or more consolidated interim storage facilities may, based on the experiences of the Private Fuel Storage effort (Utah), take several decades or more to achieve. Assuming the BRC's recommendations are acted upon it would appear that there are no unmanageable reasons that Yucca Mountain's capacity could not be available in a shorter time frame than consolidated interim storage. As such, the creation of one or more interim facilities may not provide any additional benefits over prompt efforts to complete the necessary activities at Yucca Mountain facility.
 - The report cites that the BRC "sees no unmanageable safety or security risks with current interim (on-site dry cask storage) storage arrangements" whereby SNF is stored on-site for "multiple decades up to 100 years or possibly more".
 - We are obviously concerned about on-site storage and we are increasingly alarmed when its interim period (permanency) is measured



Mayor Dennis Egan's Remarks

Regional Workshop on the Draft Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future

October 28, 2011; Minneapolis, Minnesota

Page 6

in "decades or more". We strongly encourage the BRC to define what is meant by "more" in the statement "multiple decades up to 100 years or possibly more" and provide references to the RD&D (research, development and demonstration) supporting its generalization in the context of the (1) NRC Waste Assurance Rule, (2) the report's citation that "it's clear today's institutional arrangements and storage technologies were not designed for the lengthy interim storage timescales that now appear inevitable ..." (3) the report's numerous other citations regarding the unresolved and numerous technical issues concerning fuel, fuel cladding, canister and overpack degradation mechanisms; that current safety assessments are not based on today's "standard" fuel which has a higher burnup rate, etcetera.

- The benefits of centralized interim storage are well established in the report. However, the report may be strengthened by articulating the added costs and benefits of on-site storage over a timeframe consistent with NRC's directive "*that the (NRC) staff be directed to prepare an update to the Waste Confidence Findings and Proposed Rule to account for storage at onsite facilities...for more than 100 years, but no more than 300 years...*"⁵ To add value to the report these costs and benefits should attempt to precisely measure the BRC's well articulated concerns of intergenerational equity through the inclusion of the overburden on communities currently host to on-site storage. Providing this data would to enable improved comparisons with other waste management options.
- The report acknowledges that a "...realistic assessment of the time it[s] expected to take to site, construct, license, and begin operating consolidated storage and permanent disposal facilities" is needed and the report also sites that on-site interim storage is the "only element of the back end of the fuel cycle that is currently being deployed on an operational scale in the United States". We believe that the report could be improved by further defining and clarifying that America's current reality is such that, and will remain such for future decades, heavily dependent on the on-site permanently temporary storage of waste. The report would be further improved by again addressing this current and near-term future reality within the framework of the intergenerational equity and overburden issues and concerns.

⁵ Chairman Jaczko's Supplemental Comments on SECY-09-0090 Final Update to the Commission's Waste Confidence Decision. July 22, 2010. Pages 1 and 2.



Mayor Dennis Egan's Remarks

Regional Workshop on the Draft Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future
October 28, 2011; Minneapolis, Minnesota

Page 7

Again, on behalf of the City of Red Wing, we thank the State Government's Midwestern Office and the BRC for coordination today's event and the opportunity to participate in a meaningful and substantive manner in the BRC's critically important mission. Thank you.