

Summary of Presentation
“Potential Roles for Local Governments in America’s Nuclear Future”

by

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For a panel discussion on
Topics related to Public Safety, Environmental and Local Concerns

Before the

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Blue Ribbon Commission on America’s Nuclear Future

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Summary of Presentation
“Potential Roles for Local Governments in America’s Nuclear Future”

The Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) has been invited to participate in a panel discussion entitled, “Topics related to Public Safety, Environmental and Local Concerns” which will address the following questions:

- 1) **What role should local communities and governments play, if any, in the developments and demonstration of new nuclear technologies?**
- 2) **With respect to nuclear reactors and fuel cycle facilities, what are the key safety, environmental and security concerns for local communities, and how should they be addressed?**

ECA greatly appreciates the opportunity to appear before the Reactor and Fuel Cycle Technology Subcommittee of the Blue Ribbon Commission to address these issues.¹

What role should local communities and governments play, if any, in the development and demonstration of new nuclear technologies?

ECA believes that local governments need to be involved and have a critical role to:

- **Ensure the environmental health and safety of their communities.**

Local governments have a responsibility to their constituents to ensure the unique environmental health, safety and security concerns of a community hosting nuclear facilities are prioritized in the development of any project. In addition, local governments have a role in decision-making within a community and can help identify resources necessary for proper oversight of environment health and public safety over time.

- **Provide outreach and education on nuclear issues impacting the community.**

The local government can be a trusted source of information on nuclear issues, providing education to alleviate concerns related to a proposed project and helping provide awareness of potential benefits.

- **Act as a liaison between the site and local community;**

Local governments should be a point of contact for site operators. Information can be provided to local governments to share with the community through established

¹ ECA is the national, non-profit organization of local governments adjacent to and impacted by U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear activities. ECA members include most of the communities adjoining DOE and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) sites that currently produce or formerly produced defense nuclear waste, sites that store and process defense nuclear waste, sites that are current and potential recipients of defense high-level and other nuclear wastes, and sites that may accept a future reprocessing/recycling mission.

channels. Local governments can provide information back to the site. Maintaining clear and open lines of communication will ultimately build trust and accountability among parties.

- **Advocate for local concerns and priorities.**

By developing relationships at the federal level, with the state, with private companies, and at the site, local governments can ensure that local values, concerns and priorities are understood and taken into account as new projects are planned.

- **Ensure economic opportunities exist for the community.**

A community volunteering to host a nuclear facility should be provided economic benefits, for example, jobs for the local workforce and funding for oversight and training. Local governments are uniquely positioned to negotiate on behalf of the impacted community with developers of a new nuclear project.

- **Advocate, as appropriate, for the site and project.**

As a trusted entity, local governments can help develop support for or education on a project and potential benefits to a community. In addition, local governments can serve as representatives of a community and its support for a site/project to potential partners at the regional, state, corporate or federal level.

Because local governments and communities - the potential hosts of sites for new nuclear reactors and technologies - will be impacted from the beginning to the end of a nuclear project's lifetime, it is important that a framework for communication, negotiation and coordination with the Federal government, the private sector, and state regulators be established as early as possible.

With respect to nuclear reactors and fuel cycle facilities, what are the key safety, environmental and security concerns for local communities, and how should they be addressed?

- **Many concerns of impacted communities are likely to remain the same as they are now: waste handling, transportation, security and resources to provide oversight.**

Local governments need to ensure that environmental health and safety can be regularly addressed, assessed, and local participation in decision-making is deemed necessary. ECA proposes using provisions in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act which allocated local funding for "affected units of local governments" as a model to: provide resources to permit the local community to hire third party scientists to review data and increase public confidence in the scientific integrity of a project, to provide impacted citizens the means to interact with the federal government and any operator, and to demonstrate a commitment to external oversight.

- **Specifically in regards to the development and demonstration of *new* nuclear reactors and facilities, local governments want to ensure that developing a final waste plan remains a priority and new waste streams are not created without a path for their disposal.**

The uncertainty in regards to where waste will end up directly affects health and safety decisions in communities hosting sites that currently produce or store waste. While several ECA communities have demonstrated interest in new nuclear development, including recycling, the communities that currently host high-level waste and spent fuel do not want to become de-facto long-term storage sites.