



NRC NEWS

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Office of Public Affairs Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa.resource@nrc.gov

Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

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OPENING REMARKS OF NRC CHAIRMAN GREGORY B. JACZKO AT TODAY'S BLENDING OF LOW LEVEL WASTE MEETING

Good morning. The Commission meets today to discuss the agency's waste blending policy. Over the last two years, the issue of low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) disposal has garnered greater attention in light of the closure of the Barnwell facility to out-of-compact states. The industry has increasingly looked to blending as a way to mitigate the lack of available disposal options for Class B and C waste.

While recognizing that some mixing of waste is unavoidable, and may even be necessary and appropriate for efficiency or dose reduction purposes, the NRC has historically discouraged mixing LLRW to lower the classification of waste in other circumstances. The Commission now has before it a policy paper to clarify and update our regulatory approach. It is my hope that the Commission can reach a decision in the next month or two on the various policy options that the staff ably laid out in the paper.

In developing the paper, the staff did a commendable job in soliciting input from the broad range of stakeholders that have taken an interest in this issue. We have heard from states, regional compacts, advocacy groups, waste generators, waste processors, and the Department of Energy. As we deliberate, we must remain focused on the crucial safety and technical questions at issue in order to make the right safety decision. It is also important that we continue to engage the public so that – if there is a policy change – we can implement it in the most effective way possible.

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