



# Disposal of Low-Activity Waste: EPA Perspective

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# EPA's Conceptual Approach

EPA suggested in 2003 that hazardous waste landfills might be more routinely used for disposal of low-activity radioactive waste

- Risk basis for disposal established through modeling
- Other conditions/limits could also apply
- Administrative/licensing requirements to implement

Premise: Such an approach could encourage a more consistent disposal framework based on risk

- More risk-informed use of available disposal options
- More efficient use of resources in risk reduction
- Lowered potential for mismanagement



# Why Hazardous Waste Landfills?

RCRA provides a robust regulatory framework for disposal of waste presenting a significant risk to human health and the environment

- Consistent design/technology requirements
- Prohibitions on liquids
- Treatment requirements to destroy/immobilize toxic constituents

Landfills have been used for radioactive material

- TENORM (pipe scale, tailings, treatment residuals)
- Exempted wastes
- Case by case consideration (10 CFR 20.2002)



# Issues Remaining to be Resolved

Beyond the technical concept, difficult issues would remain for this approach

- Differences between RCRA and AEA requirements (e.g., land ownership)
- Level of NRC oversight/licensing
- Impacts on current disposal framework
- Public acceptance

If a system based on risk, rather than origin, is desirable, does this approach represent progress toward that goal?



# Status of EPA's Initiative

Effort has been deferred since 2003 Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking sought public comment

- 68 FR 65120, November 18, 2003
- Initial review of public comments completed
- Priorities shifted to Yucca Mountain rulemaking

Now re-evaluating options for further action

- Would this approach improve the disposal outlook?
- What problems would it address?
- Is the situation better or worse than in 2003?
- We are interested in ideas and suggestions
- No decisions have been made

