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# Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future – What Have They Been Told and Who are They Listening to?

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# Overview: Answering the Questions (and then some)

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- What have they been told? LOTS
- Who are they listening to? NO IDEA
  
- What I feel they have been told
- What I hope they are listening to
- What can they really accomplish?

# Main Messages to the BRC (as I understand them)

- The process of selecting and developing disposal and centralized storage sites is broken
  - DOE management
  - Funding problems
  - Need for more public consensus building (perhaps the hardest to solve)
  - Recommendation: set up a FedCorp and a new public involvement process, many more...
- Push-pull on managing the waste problem
  - Push: NIMBY (except NM?)
  - Pull: Get my waste out of my state
  - Recommendation: many, but BRC must address how to make storage and disposal “workable”

# Options the BRC Has Been Presented With: Move Everything to a Federal Site

- Centralized storage at a federal site
  - Eases the public process?
  - Just move waste from shutdown plants?
    - Why? The most politically palatable: full cleanup of commercial sites
- Transportation of all waste to a site will require considerable effort
  - Lack of transportation capacity
  - No NRC transportation licenses for “high burnup” used nuclear fuel
    - Most utilities now generating “high burnup” used fuel

# Options the BRC Has Been Presented With: Wait for Disposal Until...???

- Kick the can down the road until technology can deal with the waste problem?
  - Continued on-site storage for decades (to centuries?)
  - Wait until technology to reduce the amount of waste is available
    - Is it *really* about the amount of waste? Probably not
  - Technology alone will never completely solve the problem of *siting* disposal and/or centralized storage
- Recommendation: work to “close” the fuel cycle needs to accelerate (EPRI recommendation: fast reactors first, then reprocessing)

# Geologic Disposal Considerations for BRC

- Many geologies can be suitable
  - WIPP is only one of many types
  - Geochemistry does NOT have to be reducing
  - BRC should avoid setting disposal geology criteria
- Disposal regulations
  - Is EPA/NRC combination working?
  - We will revert to outdated regulations if not Yucca Mountain
    - Need to update general regulation
    - Leave regulation to the regulator – not NAS

# Any Useful BRC Recommendation will Require Supporting Legislation

- FedCorp
- Reverse the 2002 Yucca Mountain decision and amend the NWPA
- Funding
  - To whom?
  - For what (use of Nuclear Waste Fund)?
  - Take NWF off budget?
- Siting public process: how much can/should be legislated vs. developer doing the public outreach?

# Conclusions: Not Much Ground that is Unplowed

- Are we expecting too much from the BRC?
- We don't have to wait for BRC for everything. Examples:
  - Geologic exploration
  - Recycling (including fast reactor development)
    - Unless BRC clearly states used fuel is a “waste”
  - Disposal and recycling regulatory development
  - DOE-NE roadmaps are a good approach for setting out technical work
- What legislation can actually be enacted?
- If BRC only does one thing: set out an *implementable* public process for siting





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