

Recommendation 10

Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. should be able to provide the public with detailed and accurate data on the costs that would result from the short and long-term use of nuclear waste repositories. This cost-study analysis should also enable its readers to determine the present and future competitiveness of nuclear-generated electricity.

The burial of waste in one particular spot also raises the question of the risks involved in its handling and transportation. At the present time, spent fuel wastes are stored on reactor sites. It must therefore be asked, what are the relative advantages and disadvantages of one centralized disposal site as compared to several regional disposal sites? Consequently the Committee recommends that:

Recommendation 11

Environment Canada, in collaboration with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, should produce a cost-benefit analysis comparing the establishment of one centralized storage or disposal site for spent fuel wastes with the establishment of several regional sites performing similar functions. This study should identify the risks, especially in the area of transportation, and associated protective measures resulting from each of these options.

In 1981, AECL signed a 20-year lease with the Manitoba government for one and a half sections of Crown land about 15 miles northeast of Pinawa, for the purpose of constructing an underground research laboratory. The lease forbids the use of free nuclear materials in the laboratory, as well as the use of the land for storage of nuclear waste, and it provides for restoration of the land to its original state when the lease expires. A second land lease was arranged in early 1986, to permit a groundwater study of the region around the laboratory.

Manitoba thus seems to have decided to support AECL's research work, in exchange for a guarantee from AECL and the federal government that the province will not be considered for a nuclear waste disposal site. As the Honourable Gérard Lécuyer, Manitoba's Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health, neatly put it:

We gather that the provinces that produce electricity from nuclear power, namely Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, are not particularly keen on having this research done at home. If the research is done in [a] province, there is a greater likelihood that a disposal centre will be located [on its] territory.⁽⁷³⁾

In the case of Canadian nuclear waste, the province of Ontario overwhelmingly benefits from its generation and therefore should accept whatever risks will be associated with its disposal. On the other hand, Manitoba will accept the risk associated with the non-nuclear hazardous wastes it does generate.⁽⁷⁴⁾

Although Manitoba has apparently obtained the best guarantees possible, and continues to take measures to ensure that no disposal facility will ever be constructed within its borders, many Manitobans simply do not trust AECL.

Another important point in Mr. Lécuyer's brief involved the repercussions of the installation of nuclear waste disposal facilities in the United States, near the Manitoba

⁽⁷³⁾ The Hon. Gérard Lécuyer, Minister, Department of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health of Manitoba, Issue No. 9, February 5, 1987, p. 21.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 7.