

DOE Public Meeting
Wiscasset Community Center
242 Gardiner Rd.
Wiscasset, Maine
June 3, 2016

FULL TRANSCRIPT

Mr. Andrew Griffith: Any objections? We'll get it done, thank you.

Question from audience: Are all set presentations being recorded?

Mr. Andrew Griffith. All of our public meetings in the eight locations around the country [are being recorded]. We are not counting this as one of those eight public meetings because this is a little bit more free-form. I would capture this as one of our one-on-one meetings, where we are trying to make ourselves available to any organization; any group; any individual that would like to meet with us separately.

And then we can leave how that meeting is recorded largely up to whoever is hosting us or has invited us to talk.

Comment from audience: Thank you.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Sure.

[**Mr. Andrew Griffith** calling on person asking a question from the audience]: Yes, please.

Question from audience: For the question-and-answer, would you be kind enough to repeat what is said before you address it?

Mr. Andrew Griffith: Sure. And there is also a microphone here – I don't know if we want to pass that around. But the comment was if there is a question from the audience, if I would be kind enough to repeat it. And to the best of my ability, I will.

Respondent from audience. Okay.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. So why don't we open it up. Yes ma'am.

Question from audience. Could you summarize some of the ideas that were said last night that were recorded, and that said you thought were productive, and [that] you will talk with your committees going forward?

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Okay, so the question I heard is if I could summarize the key points that we took away from last night's meeting in Boston, and how it might factor into our plans.

There were a number of topics that were very strong statements of wanting to stop all waste generation. A clear vote of non-support for the future of nuclear energy. We're going to have to record that, because that was a clear message that we received.

There were also opinions saying that nuclear has got to be some part of our future low-carbon economy.

Our effort – we're not going to weigh into that discussion. I think the clear outcome for us is that regardless of the future of nuclear energy itself, there is an existing need to manage what has been accumulated. Not just from the commercial power plants, but also from the legacy of the Cold War, our nuclear stockpile, and all the nuclear research we've done in the past, because there's waste accumulated around DOE sites as well.

However, we need to record that sentiment because it's important – it was one that came up quite often in the discussion.

There are also a number of shutdown plants around the Northeast where the plants have either been totally shut down, like Maine Yankee, and dismantled, and all that's left is the fuel storage, or there are plants that are currently operating, but there are plans to shut them down in several years.

Our program – what we propose – is that the interim storage facilities priority initially is to receive fuel from the shutdown plants, such as Maine Yankee; such as the other 13 around the country that are currently shut down and the fuel is still sitting on-site.

There is also a sentiment that next in line should be the plants that are still operating, but planned to be shut down, and that there is some level of concern by the people that live around them, regarding how safe those sites are, and I think that's largely due to the population centers around them. And there was also a mention of some other issues that could affect the long-term safety of storing fuel on sites.

And so we have to take that and try to figure out how that could factor into our plans.

But along those lines, there are levels of complexity, when we are going through our planning, that aren't entirely in our control. When it comes to what's first in line, and what's next, and then what's next, each of the utilities, when they started operation at other plants, and then it was determined that the federal government was responsible for taking the fuel off the sites. There was something established that was called the Standard Contract. And the sequence that we are supposed to comply with in moving fuel away from the utilities is determined by which utility signed the contract first.

And in some cases, the shutdown plant was not part of that utility that signed that contract first. And so, there has to be some adjustment to that sequence. It's a complexity that I think can be dealt with, but some of the complicating factors are all the utilities have sued the Department of Energy, the federal government, for not taking out the fuel – not starting pick-up of the fuel in 1998. And many of those suits – well, they've all been filed by the utilities; they are in various states of being settled, or have been settled; you're aware of the penalties that we're paying – they're basically the Judgment Fund that comes

out of the Treasury off the top of the Budget. Congress doesn't even get to vote on that, or appropriate that; that's going toward funding the interim storage of spent fuel around the country.

I guess back to your point of finding a solution to the sequence. We believe that there is a technical solution, but there has to be a legal solution, too. And it's going to take negotiation.

So those are some of the key points, especially relevant I think to your community. I don't know, Melissa, do you have any other points that you'd like to share that you took away from the conversations?

Ms. Melissa Bates. I guess I was trying to understand your question a little bit better. I'm going to re-characterize it and would like to see if you agree that this is part of it. Were you asking what were some of the major themes that we've been hearing through these public meetings? Or was it just more specifically on last night?

Clarification from audience member. Your statement was that you heard some good ideas last night that you will take back and think about – I guess that's what I was asking.

Ms. Melissa Bates. Okay. Alright, so some of the ideas that I have heard – that I have taken to heart – so on the idea of consent, you know, there were a number of individuals last night that really voiced an opinion that this really needs to start with some sort of referendum at the local level. You know, that it needs to start with the people in the community and from there it builds up into the political layers and then it goes up.

There were also other opinions that it should start at the state level; that the Department should send a letter to the 50 governors and ask them, hey are you even willing to consider having this in your state? Just to kind of get a feel for that. You know there are pros and cons, either way. One is faster; one is slower. One may put someone in a political suicide situation; I don't know. So that was one thing.

Another theme that we've been hearing is environmental justice. That trying to figure out how can you move forward in a conversation with the community that may be disadvantaged in a way that doesn't take advantage of that community? And what criteria, or what factors, can you put into that process to make sure that it's a fair relationship – that everyone has an equal voice. You know, to make sure that they aren't being taken advantage of. But yet, they could still have an advantage for having the facility like this in their community.

Another message that we heard last night very strongly was that the host communities for the current sites are left out of the equation – that they feel like they don't have a voice. That's; okay, that's a "so they shut down the site" situation. Utilities have a means of suing the government in order to get their costs reimbursed through that avenue, but that the costs borne by the local community – there's not really a means, and here you have an economic disadvantage, or you're not getting that economic benefit from the taxpayer community, and as well as you're having to pay to manage the site, or regulate the site. So that was an interesting perspective that was actually unique – and, oh, I guess it was brought up in Chicago.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Yeah, we had the Mayor of Zion, Illinois, speak at the Chicago meeting and he brought up the same point. So there's definitely a problem right there. And I expect other shutdown sites would have similar types of scenarios.

Ms. Melissa Bates. Yeah; another thing that I've heard is that transportation – there's two different veins that I've heard it in; in the sense of there are some that have felt that transportation – like how the routes are selected – needs to be consent-based; the Department doesn't currently have this policy in the sense that transportation is dictated by the [Department of] Commerce, and we don't own the rail lines; we don't operate them; but there's a lot of regulations out there already that they use as far as figuring out routes, but the communities still have a voice by working with their state and local governments, which we work with through a National Transportation Stakeholders Forum and through other venues, to make sure that they are trained for emergency operations if anything were to happen or, that kind of thing, as well as to make sure they have adequate funding to support those operations.

A different thing that I heard last night was not that it need be consent-based routing, but just that the transportation needs to be vetted better – the appropriate people need to be at the table to make sure that one, that there is the capability and that two, that basically that all the entities that have a role in the transportation are all at the table and are okay with it moving forward.

I'm trying to think if – there's been a lot of really good points.

Okay, sorry, one more, I don't know if I'm starting to ramble, but another one is intergenerational fairness, right? So, say a community raises its hand and says we'd like to host a facility like this. So, like a storage repository. Who has a voice for those many generations down the road or into the future – to say that *they* consent; so that they are okay with it?

And then there's been some interesting thoughts presented at these meetings in the sense of – I think it was in Sacramento – an individual got up and the way he phrased it was that people vote with their feet; I think is the phrase he used. And how he characterized it is people in the future will either choose to live there, or choose not to live there; you know, and so in essence if they disagree with a facility being in a certain location, they will either choose to move away or choose to be by it.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. And we can point out that in the panel discussion that has proven true in some areas where people who did want to live near wind farms or did not want to live near wind farms, and the property values – in that scenario – the property values really didn't make an impact, because there was always somebody willing to move in.

Ms. Melissa Bates. Yeah, and maybe just this one final one. It's something I've been wrestling with since it was raised in a meeting, and I think it was actually at the Denver meeting, and I don't have an answer yet – and I mean, it would be interesting to hear your guys' thoughts, but one of the things we've been hearing is that we need to have willing and informed communities, right? You can't just ask a community to raise its hand without it knowing what it's getting into. And in order to get them – in order for them to be informed, they need to have the ability to bring subject matter experts of their choosing, people that they are willing to listen to, independently, to come into the community, and the question that was raised, or the thought that was raised in Denver was: So the government has been funding some of these aspects, you know, or are thinking about going with the funding opportunity announcement as this is a component that we have, if we're allowed to go forward with this, this is a component that we would like to include in it, but the thought that was brought up in Denver, was, is the money tainted, right? Are the results, or the presenters, or the thoughts or conclusions that are coming, that are funded by that money – are they already skewed towards the government side, because the government is funding it? And the thought that

was presented was like, "How can you filter it? Right? How can you fund the money to make sure it's a fair and balanced opinion?"

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Now from our perspective, if we granted money to go to a community to hire their own experts, we would have absolutely zero connections with their conclusions that their experts came up with. And ethically their experts have to be found by them, not us. So we believe they're not only legally and contractually, because the contract would dictate, that they are responsible to the community, not to us or the state, or the tribe, but not to us. But ethically, for professionals in our field, when they operate in that type of scenario, they follow the ethics and the contract in that order. They have to ethically be above board, for starters.

We believe the issue with the contractors is that they will report to the community, the state or the tribe, but we wouldn't stand for things anyway different. If we are to go to build a durable solution. Because that means we believe that's the way of kind of leveling the ground from the big federal government to the community – that we want to build a partnership. And a true partnership. One of equal footing.

Question from the audience. What type of money are you offering potentially to communities that might be interested in housing this? Are you making important their interests?

Mr. Andrew Griffith. We believe it would have to be worth their interest if it's going to work. In the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget request, we included about \$25 million to be distributed amongst communities, states or tribes that want to step forward to start a discussion with us. No commitments; but the start of a discussion with us to learn more about this important problem. That request is sitting with Congress now. And until we get a – well, hopefully before we get a final appropriation, but right now between the Senate and the House there are differences of opinion on how this appropriation is to proceed. Or to proceed at all. And we're hoping that there will be some funding that we can use for that purpose. That comes out of our appropriations so that we can start what we believe are very important discussions. To start the establishment of a true partnership.

Question from the audience. Was the method of geologic disposal discussed in terms of how? Originally, we had waste that was originally at Hanford and, first of all, various states and communities resisted that terribly – they didn't want any waste going through their areas at all. So, there were many times trains were loaded, and they just weren't allowed to come in for fuel. So, how are you going to prevent that from happening? And I come from a state where there's that practice – it's not the same thing, but the deep waste that requires you create those wells, but eventually are we to need more wells? And it's heartening to start to see some results related to earthquakes and that sort of thing, and waste repositories in solid formations, so how is this method developed and how much have we seen of it?

Mr. Andrew Griffith. The globally accepted, technically sound approach for isolating this waste is geologic disposal. Various countries are in the process of – Finland is the most advanced in siting a disposal facility in granite. They are in the construction phase. Sweden, France and Canada are also in various stages of moving forward for geologic disposal. France is pursuing a clay disposal geology. And it's been tested and their safety authorities are confident that it meets their safety standards. Yucca Mountain has – even though that project is suspended – The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has reviewed the license application that was submitted years ago and they concluded, with some exceptions that still need to take place, such as the State of Nevada providing DOE with water rights to operate the

facility as well as Congress withdrawing the land for government use. But their safety evaluation report concluded that that is a suitable disposal approach. And if those other conditions were met, it would not have to proceed with the construction; however, all of those things are suspended for the primary reason that the state is not a consenting participant in the process, and without the state supporting that effort, it's just not a workable approach.

Question from the audience. So I have a question. I guess I heard your question a little bit differently; the way I heard your question was how did the country even land on geologic disposal being the appropriate means of moving forward?

Second audience member comment. Yeah, but on that, when I mentioned that they looked at the first practice – the method as outlined, but it seemed to be theoretical – are there any actual facilities, I mean that are involved in current tests?

Mr. Andrew Griffith. We do have the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant operating. Operations are fine now, but they did have an issue a year ago, but that's been an operational geologic disposal facility for transuranic waste, which is also very long-lived. But that's been I think one of the models of an approach that doesn't work without the consent of the local communities as well as the state.

Ms. Melissa Bates. With everything, I wanted to point to – there are some studies that are out there that I can point you in the direction of from like the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s; you know, where scientists really delved into this issue to research different means of disposing of this waste; you know, shooting it into space; going into the Marianas Trench; deep geologic disposal, and there's a number of alternatives that were investigated and basically the scientific population that was involved in those analysis found that geologic disposal was the best means of permanently isolating this from the biosphere.

Comment from audience. Aside from politics, which is [important] by the way, where is it located?

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Oh, that's in New Mexico, in Southeastern New Mexico, and actually at that site – it's actually a good point to raise with this group here – there are two private initiatives that have started the process to be that pilot facility for us. There are some challenges that we have to face in order to factor that into our plans for working that out.

One of them is in Southeastern New Mexico, and is referred to as the Eddy-Lea Alliance; it's two companies adjoining that have been hosting the WIPP facility for years, and they feel comfortable and confident of their ability to manage spent fuel so that they're pursuing a privately funded initiative; the other one is the Waste Control Specialists in West Texas in Andrews County right across the border from Eddy and Lea Counties. But they are pursuing – and they actually had a license application submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission last month – they submitted the license application last month and our challenge of engaging with them is – there are several levels – one question is do we have the authority to pursue that approach? There are some provisions in the existing Waste Policy Act that we can't build a government facility until we have the authorization to construct, which obviously we don't have yet.

How does that apply to these private initiatives – but since we're not building anything, we believe that we have authority; however, there are some legal ambiguities that we may be challenged on and in order to clear up those ambiguities, those grey areas, and to build certainty into that approach it would be good

to have a clear direction from Congress that we're authorized to pursue those approaches and that private approach.

There are some other legal issues that would have to be addressed in terms of if the government takes title to the fuel that is moved there, but the private company has possession, how does that get addressed from a liability standpoint?

And so there's a couple of other issues, primarily technical and regulatory-wise, where we would like to feel more comfortable, and I guess another, kind of to the heart of our pursuing a consent-based siting approach – while those local communities have the consent of the local communities and by all external appearances it seems like they have the support of their state, and the legislatures, but the state legislators haven't yet passed binding resolutions of support, which in my mind will raise a question.

It doesn't mean it can't be done, but it's clearly an area that we would like to trust and establish a relationship with them, and clearly from the government standpoint our responsibility is, if we establish a contractual relationship with them, that it has to be done competitively. The prices have to be market-driven and it has to be done in a way that's by-the-book so that in the future, if somebody did challenge us, the process in which we engage with them will withstand any kind of challenge, because we don't want to get a year or two or five down the road and have something disrupt any kind of progress.

So these are all things we feel are manageable but not necessarily simple or going to happen overnight.

Comment from the audience. Thank you.

Question from the audience. Hi. A couple of questions. You mentioned that the Department may provide funding for a town or a community to hire its own expert. To me, that seems like it setting up an unnecessary adversarial situation – I've worked with [unintelligible due to tape fading] managing many projects before with private funding, and in almost all of those, the community and all of the representatives engaged would get together and they would eventually together select a reliable consultant. So what that meant – well, it may at some point become a problem; right off the bat you do not have an adversarial situation – I would prefer a situation like that.

The second thing is for years the federal government was trying to site a new federal prison in North Berwick, and eventually they sited one in the community of Berlin, and the reason there was jobs and the stress of economic loss.

So I'm assuming these facilities you are coming up with are going to be subject to these kinds of criteria; and if that's the case, I would encourage, in every circumstance, that there should be provision for payment of lower taxes equivalent to the siting of the facility and its storage but also about jobs because in its own way we can't have major waste facilities cited in Maine [unintelligible due to tape fade]. But you have a special waste so it's going to make it a harder process to get through, but I think that community has to have a [unintelligible due to tape fade] jobs, long-term jobs, are important to the community.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Yeah, I think on your first point, the exact thing we don't want to have that sort of a relationship and so while we certainly – we want to gain trust, and right now the federal government in general, and DOE specifically, is operating at kind of a trust deficit. And so we don't necessarily – what

we want is for people to have a say; we have no objection to verifying what they say, when it comes to technical matters where they might not have expertise, and so it's a confidence-boosting measure so that they don't just take everything we say as gospel, but that there's some robustness underlying their trust in us. That they can independently verify what we're saying and that can give them the confidence that we are not telling them something that is not true. And it's just a start, because in situations like this, and this applies to those other nations that I mentioned before – they are all proceeding because they are pursuing a consent-based siting process that is working in their countries. The trust is very hard to earn, but very easy to lose. And so that's when the important factors – giving them the resources necessary to independently verify and hold us accountable for our commitments and how we believe technically, the program can advance.

To the point of how; what kind of conditions the community places on hosting one of our facilities, I think that's a really important part of the dialogue and the discussion, and the negotiation that has to take place about – that we have to recognize that they're performing a national service like hosting one of these facilities, but they have to be willing to do it in a way that makes them feel comfortable and it enables them to sustain that ability to host it, as well as survive independently of hosting this facility, so payment of lower taxes I think would be an appropriate topic to put on the table and there are many other, I think, topics that would be worthy of discussion. And jobs really have to be essential discussion points.

Mr. Johnson. Hi, I'm [Mr.] Johnson. Thanks for coming. And part of this discussion – I guess I'd like to start with trying to understand better where you discussed a number of obstacles and your questionable legal stance for moving ahead with privately operated and sited interim storage. And the challenges without state support arriving at a permanent storage solution. And I know that if you look at the map that you provided where there are current facilities, and which of them are shut down?

That there is great deal of consternation in this town – so here we are, in one of the communities that has a long-term storage that we don't want, that the government promised it would deal with many decades ago clearing spent fuel, and even here in our state there are many people who consider that Maine Yankee was shut down, and so far as they are concerned, this is done with.

But there are ongoing concerns in this community and the [unintelligible due to tape fade] development properties and such, how do you overcome both what you see as the present legal challenges in order to move forward – what are the next steps? And what sort of engagement would help move this along, given that all these various states that have concerns about the storage that we're stuck with? And other states entirely may be the ones involved in interim and long-term storage solutions – they are going to hear a lot about the prospects for siting things in your states, while there is very little press or awareness about the challenges all over our nation over storage at present. Two questions.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Yeah, I'll kind of jump in there. I guess part of our objective in going around the country is raising the general awareness of the challenge of the waste. I think in terms of addressing some of the challenges with the private initiatives, we're formulating a way of having a public dialogue – how we can engage with them in a way that is consistent with our consent-based siting process, and the Federal Acquisition Regulations for contracting those types of services, so that we can address kind of the contractual transparency issue in a contractual relationship.

We're also ready to have discussions with those private initiatives, regarding how we measure the sufficiency of the consent that they have. Is that sufficient for us to have trust in the longevity of the relationship and the enterprise? Like I said, I think we can get there.

In terms of the legal questions, again, we believe we have the authority to pursue it, but in order to especially gain confidence in the relationship, we would like additional direction from Congress asserting that we do have authority, so there are high-level discussions between the Department and members of Congress on those types of topics.

And I think fundamentally for this challenge to really see it through to the establishment of a solution, the ending role, it's going to take persistence. Recognizing that there's going to be an Administration change; recognizing that we have questions from the two different extremes of the House version of our Fiscal Year 2017 Budget and the Senate version of our Fiscal Year 2017 Budget – we're going to have to be flexible and persistent. And hopefully we can zero in on an approach that can be sustained over the many years that are going to be necessary.

Follow-on question from audience. Would it be correct to say then that at some level you're telling us we need to work to get our senators and representatives to advocate for a common plan? Obviously, it's not just our state that needs to do that.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Yeah, you know, I'm in no position to suggest what you do or what you don't do. But my vote is, collectively as a nation, that we find a way that helps navigate through these challenges that we face.

Follow-on question from audience. Are you in any way trying to raise awareness of what the issues are and its growing scope – of spent nuclear fuel and other high-level waste storage, that is certainly not an ideal location for storage if everything is left in place? Because I question how many people around the country are aware of how much this is a growing problem.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. I agree. We're trying to raise that awareness.

Ms. Melissa Bates. At these meetings, really, you know, in the booklet in the packet, that touches on the issue somewhat as well. I guess one other thing that I would add maybe is the obstacles with the things that are needed is sustainable funding.

Comment from audience. Listening – those of us who are more than 30 years old – recognize the fact that this has been going on forever and ever and ever. Is anybody attempting to put together a timeline for mitigating this problem? This has been going on for a long time. The world is changing. The climate is changing. I feel like our casks are on a peninsula at sea level and sea levels are rising. How much longer is it going to be safe sitting in concrete casks at ocean level where it has to go? Or is FEMA prepared to handle this on a 30-day notice to move it all out? There is no sense of urgency.

And I think that's something that needs to be brought to the Department of Energy, and Congress; they need to be aware that they have tabled this since the beginning of the nuclear age. And they haven't done a darn thing with it, and it's going to come back and bite us all in the butt very badly, very soon. So a sense of urgency and a timeline that is workable so that the community, particularly those that have the sites in what were 20 years ago safe, are no longer safe. They're being threatened by the environment.

And if something isn't being done to at least move those within an environmentally fragile system around them to take them off site, there's going to be big catastrophe. And it's not far away. Thank you.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Thank you for the comment. Yeah, I'd say about that sense of urgency; there is a tremendous sense of urgency on our team.

The challenge we face, though, is that if we put together something at this point that would be considered a somewhat arbitrary timeline for an aggressive approach, there's – there's the duration of time that's necessary to build that partnership and establish that consent for the destination site, and that is unknown. And through the process that we're trying to develop, we hope to put some parameters on what's a reasonable expectation of a long-term partnership that you start and grow and reach a point where we can move forward.

Because of the past, top-down approach, it's very easy to put down, you know, from a technical approach, it's very easy to say well, we can, you know, build such a facility in so much time; it will cost so much money; we can build a transportation network in so much time; and at the end of the day, the social implications of acceptance of that, and consent, to host those facilities, are the key ingredient that we don't have the ability to measure at this point.

I think if you look at all the failed attempts at siting facilities like this, there are points in time when decisions were forced upon the process due to some schedule; due to a milestone; due to a decision point; and when with those decisions were forced on the process before there was enough time to fully consider the implications or the ability to go forward, it evolved into that process stopping. And I think again you can point to, in the U.S., and the most recent US case, for Yucca Mountain. In 1987 they went from three options for geologic disposal in the United States down to one and that was Yucca Mountain. That was referred to as the Screw Nevada Act. Because it was done in a way where Nevada didn't really have a voice and they took it as an offence. And that's where the process started to derail. In my assessment.

And so while I appreciate the need for a sense of urgency, the way a phased and adaptive process has to unfold – it's a matter of taking the small victories sooner – that with confidence and support, it will lead to the hard and significant victories in the future, such as removing fuel from fragile ecosystems and making it a priority of removing fuel from shutdown sites, which we agree is important to establish as a priority.

Question from the audience. Having lived in Antwerp, Belgium for 32 years, coming to Wiscasset in 2006, and looking at the fact that the Kingdom of Belgium has just issued, or will be issuing, iodine tablets to every member of the country – it used to be just us, in the Antwerp area – with our two little plants, so there were iodine tablets in our medicine chest in case of an accident, I'm wondering what is the potential of needing them here in Wiscasset if there is a leak in one of the canisters? I'm also interested in how attractive are these canisters to terrorists who might be considering making dirty bombs?

Mr. Andrew Griffith. So the safety aspect. That's a good question. And it brings in the role of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission because ultimately they are the authorities that the utility needs to be accountable to in order to satisfy the safety requirements and the security requirements for the interim storage facility.

And this was a good point that was brought up at the meeting last night in Boston, as well as in some of our other public meetings, that there are distinct and separate roles that different federal agencies play in

the area of nuclear waste management and nuclear power generation. The Department of Energy – we have the responsibility for taking the spent fuel off the commercial sites and developing, executing and performing solutions for that. Clearly, we're behind schedule, and I don't want to get into the details any more than I already have on why Yucca Mountain wasn't a solution.

But from a nuclear regulatory standpoint, they issued a license for the interim storage facility, so it's really between them and the utility, as the utility is the licensee and NRC is the regulator, to holding the utility accountable for the safe operations of that plant. And from my perspective, NRC is performing the function of a strong, independent regulator well.

When we go forward – we open an interim storage facility – they will regulate us. They will oversee those operations. They will oversee the transportation – they will oversee the certification of the transportation systems, as well as the operations of our storage facilities.

For disposal, the Environmental Protection Agency will establish the disposal standards for a future geologic disposal facility. NRC would also be responsible for enforcing those standards and regulating the Department of Energy in the operation of that disposal site.

So like NRC would oversee DOE operations of the disposal site, they're overseeing the operations of the interim storage site here.

So getting back to the heart of your question, if they deem it was appropriate that iodine capsules would be issued in your community due to some tangible risk or threat, I'm sure they would be in a position to tell you. It turns out that the vulnerabilities of terrorist or other security infractions against that – it's up to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to enforce the regulations to assure the safety of that and on the utility to take the necessary actions to protect it from any kind of threat.

So from my perspective – I don't know all the details – of the license or the term or conditions of the license, but I'm confident knowing the process; I'm confident that the participants – both the utility as the licensee and the NRC as the regulator – are holding to the standards of our safety and security regulations.

Ms. Gina Hamilton. Hi, I'm Gina Hamilton from *The Wiscasset Newspaper*. One of the questions I have for you has to do with the potential for using liquid fluoride reactors to break down some of the material, as opposed to storing it in possibly, you know, tectonically uninhabited places. Is there any thought toward maybe creating some of these facilities to try to reduce the amount of material there is?

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Well, beyond the lithium fluoride, or the liquid reactors; the advanced reactors; there's a range of advanced reactors that can transmute the long-lived isotopes in spent nuclear fuel.

But there's a lot of steps that would have to take place to reprocess it after it's done, as well as our nation doesn't have a policy yet that supports it. Our nation essentially – we have a once-through fuel cycle. While advanced reactors can shift into future fuel cycles that involve recycling – that is certainly a sustainable option for the future – the steps to getting there are many and expensive. I think they show great promise. However, the duration to get there – it's going to take a lot of time.

In the meantime, we are continuing to generate fuel. If we are successful in getting to a place where we have a closed nuclear fuel cycle with advanced reactors, there is no practical way to consume all the

existing spent nuclear fuel. And so regardless, there's always going to be high-level waste generated from the reprocessing step. So we'll always need to have a way of dealing with the high-level waste. And we'll never be able to consume all the spent fuel that has been generated.

So again that's I think a strong motive for us to get started now on establishing a disposal mechanism so we can manage the existing waste.

Ms. Gina Hamilton. Thank you. I had one other question, and that is about the tectonics of some places that we've considered to be very safe, but turned out to have earthquake faults running through them, or in the case of WIPP, which was mentioned earlier, earthquake faults that are emerging as other activities are going on, such as fracking. If we decide on a site, for instance, is there going to be a point in the future where human activity is going to render those sites unsafe?

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Clearly, before a site is approved for disposal, there would have to be a thorough characterization and I can tell you that the geologies that we need to be looking at are not near fracking. And so that kind of long-term stability has got to be essential for any disposable site to be viable.

Ms. Gina Hamilton. Thank you.

Mr. Daniel H. Thompson. My name is Daniel Thompson. And I was a town planner for Maine Yankee, the site of the close, which reduced our tax base almost overnight. And yet, Maine Yankee came to me as town planner one day and said, "We've got to close this down, but we really need to have some advice from the community. How would you approach that?"

Well, I made it up out of my head immediately, and said, "Well, we just need to have some kind of group that pays attention to this." This was the beginning of the consent-based idea. I want the record to show that the consent was right here in Wiscasset, Maine.

We were basically very professionally approached by Maine Yankee's management that had the wisdom to see that it wasn't the town's fault – that the metallurgy was failing at the plant, and they had to shut it down. It was a traumatic situation for us, and yet we wanted to participate as best we could.

And so, to make a long story short, we invented the Community Advisory Panel, and Senator [King's Advisor] Marge KilKelly, who was here, was elected as the Chair; I'm currently Vice-Chair of that panel as it exists today.

And I just want to say that we stood with the community over many years trying to figure out a safe way to approach all this; what is the best way to do this and so forth and so on; for instance, I really believed that the community input on wet storage or dry storage really was a tipping point in the whole industry, because it was here that we had to decide – that we had to make that decision. Maine Yankee had to make that decision; the Nuclear Regulatory Commission had to make that decision; and the decision was in my opinion properly made to put it into dry storage. Dry storage then puts it into rather safe canisters that can be transported out of here – and we want it out of here. And we've made that clear – that statement, all the way from – it's not a political question, it's a question of common sense.

So that is what has occurred here. And we are delighted that the Blue Ribbon Commission picked up on that experience of ours, and created the idea of consent-based. And I think – what I'm hearing – is that it

may be a little bit overcomplicated – the way it's being approached. Because rather than looking at all the barriers to doing it, it is probably better to look at the opportunities. And if the opportunities are scientifically-based; like for instance, I know, I happen – in another life – to have done some things helping some people in Carlsbad, New Mexico with a waste isolation project. Those folks – I can remember, reading, as a kid, *Scientific American*, saying that the best place for the waste is in a salt lens. Well, there is a huge salt lens underneath Carlsbad, New Mexico, and that's been the place where the waste has gone to.

So, it's really a no-brainer in a way that a geological repository has got to be the answer. And given that – and the scientific evidence that you've eloquently alluded to – is very, very solid.

And then the question is where are the places that might a) benefit by having it, socially and economically, while at the same time, scientifically – and going to those folks with a process something like the Community Advisory Panel need to start to come up with something to advise, some kind of consent; some kind of consensus as to what the community really felt they wanted – that's the approach that can be taken for locations that would be suitable. But somebody's got to facilitate this; they've got to be a catalyst for making that happen.

And so it seems to me that the way that it should be approached is that someone has got to say from the government, "Would you be interested in..." If it can be framed with, "And we can help by giving you some experience from others who have tried to do this kind of thing in the past," we'll avoid the way they did it in Nevada – we'll do it in a better way.

I think, you know, it was right after World War II that all of this was happening – the government was running everything – it was on an emergency basis; it was assumed that the Bureau of Land Management was God, so of course, it didn't stick. It just didn't have the community behind it.

That can be done now. The experience – we're all learning, we're all us humans on the planet Earth. You know there's no operating manual that we're following – but we're learning. And I think that this consent-based process can be a great opportunity for many places to not only look at maybe siting some waste from someplace, but maybe look at their own economic development as a question. In fact, I would approach, first, the economic development folks, both public and private, and see if that could be a way to ask the question of the community, "How would you like to have a consideration for doing this through some kind of consent-based process?"

So I would urge you take it away from where it all started, right here in Wiscasset, Maine. With the message that it can't be so much time with litigation, or legal questions, or partisan politics – we've got to get away from that, and we've got to try to have some common sense that is approached with just the folks in the area that would be willing to talk about it.

And I think you'll get the pros and the cons and one of the most important things from one of my colleagues, Dr. Michael Kelly, who was the regional psychologist on organizational development, to hear is the way to approach a common goal and come up with a vision that is competent. And the way to do that, "Oh, you have an objection. Well, let's see if I can state what your objection is. Is that right? Is your objection, correct?"

That process right there – of restating the objection to something – can very often turn into a positive discussion of finding a common goal. And if we can all find some kind of common goal, or common vision, of what we want to do with our land, our community, our economy, then we can have a finalization that will be a consent-based location for the waste.

So, more power to you folks. I'm glad you are going around the country, and I just think – don't make it sound so hard.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Thank you. Do you have any plans for 23rd of July? Because our last public meeting is in Phoenix, and if you happen to be in Phoenix, I'd love to have you come talk.

Mr. Daniel H. Thompson. Frankly, I'm so busy right now right now with economic development...

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Yeah, I understand.

Mr. Daniel H. Thompson...that I'm not going to be there. Although my wife is here – her nephew lives in Tucson, and we would love to have an excuse to come visit.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Well, thank you for that. That was very – you're right, sometimes we do get bogged down in the details and the challenges. I can only agree that there are significant opportunities available as part of being a solution.

Ms. Melissa Bates. Just so that you know if we get bogged down in the challenges, our team is really optimistic – we have a great team. [Laughs].

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Any other comments, questions? [Addressing a raised hand in the audience: "Please" [go ahead]].

Comment from the audience. If there are no other questions, I'd like to, on behalf of the Board of Selectmen and the town, and the greater community, thank you for coming. I hope it was worthwhile for you. I know it was worthwhile for us. And we hope to move forward, and we wish you well.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. Thank you very much.

Ms. Melissa Bates. Thank you.

[Applause].

Ms. Melissa Bates. One last thing. It is in your information packet, but if you guys have any lingering thoughts after you go home; sleep on it – we do have an e-mail inbox – it's consentbasedsiting@hq.doe.gov and that information is in your packet, as well as we do have a website. If you have ways of improving our website with new information you'd like to see on it, drop us a recommendation. So, okay.

Mr. Andrew Griffith. And we also, as part of our effort, we have a distribution list; if you want to be added to that distribution list, just send your name into that e-mail address and make the request and we'll put you on the list.

Thank you, everyone.