Engaging Nuclear Plant Host Communities to Inform Multiple Federal Agencies across Interrelated Policy Issues Concerning Nuclear Plant Closure, Decommissioning, and Spent Fuel and Waste Management

Multiple federal agencies would benefit from having an organized group of nuclear host local communities to provide local government stakeholder input on policy matters related to spent nuclear fuel, nuclear waste, and nuclear plant closures and decommissioning. Specific issues include integrated waste management and consent-based siting of spent fuel and high-level radioactive waste, spent fuel transport, and decommissioning rulemaking discussions. Relevant agencies include the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, but also the Economic Development Administration and Department of Agriculture as communities – especially rural communities – plan for socioeconomic impact mitigation in the wake of the closure of a major contributor to employment, household income, and local taxes. This need will become all the more relevant as the current wave of nuclear plant closures continues.

Engaging host local governments in the consideration of multiple interrelated nuclear plant closure, decommissioning and waste policy matters would establish a cadre of well-informed local stakeholders who are most directly affected by plant closures to advise multiple federal agencies. Communities that host nuclear power plants should be actively and substantively engaged in policy deliberations from the outset. The Nuclear Energy Institute serves as a unified industry voice and has formed a Decommissioning Task Force to advise the NRC and other federal agencies. We believe it is in the best interest of the public, the federal government and the industry to have host communities similarly engaged. It would also create a core group of nuclear plant host community stakeholders which could engage with potential consenting waste-receiving communities.

An organization such as the National Association of Development Organizations should be supported to convene host local governments. At issue is the mitigation of local impacts of nuclear plant closures, orderly redevelopment, and the relationship of these goals to federal policy. An entity like NADO could convene host governments to 1) document the local experience of past closures and decommissionings including economic, fiscal, employment, and environmental impacts; 2) assess host community costs, benefits and risks of different closure, decommissioning and fuel and waste management scenarios; and 3) forming a Host Community Closure, Decommissioning, Fuel and Waste Policy Task Force to solicit input from the larger group of affected communities to provide local government stakeholder insight for multiple federal agencies across a range of interrelated policy issues. This would be similar to NADO’s work funded by the Economic Development Administration to document local resilience responses to multiple disasters in the 2011-2012 timeframe.

Contact:
Chris Campany, Executive Director
Windham Regional Commission
139 Main Street Suite 505 Brattleboro, VT 05345
ccampany@windhamregional.org cell 802-380-3511 office 802-257-4547 x106
www.windhamregional.org