

PERSPECTIVE ON THE FUTURE

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FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

I appreciate the opportunity to be with you. This is a topic that is open enough that I can't get in too much trouble.

In order to anticipate FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS, we need to reflect on the past, evaluate the present, and then plan for FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.

Our generation has gone through a lot of change--let me share a little with you. Since 1948, consider the changes we have witnessed:

We were born before television, before penicillin, before polio shots, frozen foods, xerox, plastic, contact lenses, frisbees and the Pill.

We were born before radar, credit cards, laser beams and ballpoint pens; before panty hose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip dry clothes--and before man walked on the moon.

We were certainly not born before the difference between the sexes was discovered, but we were born surely before the sex change; we made do with what we had! We got married first and then lived together. How quaint can you be? And we were the last generation that was so dumb as to think you needed a husband to have a baby!

In our time, closets were for clothes, not for "coming out of," and having a meaningful relationship meant getting along with our cousins.

We were before house husbands, gay rights, computer dating, dual careers and commuter marriages. We were before daycare centers, group therapy and nursing homes. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, artificial hearts, word processors, yogurt, and guys wearing earrings. For us, time sharing meant togetherness--not computers or condominiums; a 'chip' meant a piece of wood; hardware meant hardware; and software wasn't even a word!

In 1940, "made in Japan" meant JUNK and the term "making out" referred to how you did on your exam. Pizzas, "McDonalds," and instant coffee were unheard of.

We hit the scene when there were five and ten-cent stores, where you bought things for five and ten cents. For one nickel you could ride a streetcar, make a phone call, buy a Coke or enough stamps to mail one letter and two postcards. You could buy a new Chevy Coupe for \$600, but who could afford one; a pity too, because gas was eleven cents a gallon!

In our day, cigarette smoking was fashionable, grass was mowed, COKE was a cold drink and POT was something you cooked in. ROCK MUSIC was grandma's lullaby and AIDS were helpers in the principal's office.

No wonder we are so confused and there is such a generation gap today!

BUT WE HAVE SURVIVED!!! SO WE DO HAVE SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE ABOUT!

To anticipate future developments, we need to understand:

- What are the current regulatory policies, and
- What is the view toward proposed changes that affect the treatment and disposal of Low-Level Radioactive Waste (LLRW)?

The problem preventing resolution are Proponents for Change vs. Proponents for Maintaining Tradition.

Currently, let's discuss the Compact situation.

- It appears it is difficult for the public to distinguish between Department of Energy (DOE) waste issues and LLRW. This confuses how we approach problems.

- After five years we have:
 - The S.E. progressing (on second base),
 - NW/Rocky Mountain Compact negotiating a proposed supercompact (Swinging for a HR).
- California, Nebraska, Illinois, and Texas are all progressing (on first base)
- New York and Michigan (not even up to bat)
 - On 8/8 the National Conference of State Legislators are considering revisiting the LLWPA.
- There has been developed/or is developing a five-year plan on Best Demonstrated Available Technology (BDAT). What does it mean?
 - Best technology? or,
 - Keeping the exposure the lowest--using the expression of ALARA. (Just a reminder "R" means reasonably not remotely)
- The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has developed a BRC plan that is being bombarded.
 - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sees it as too permissive
 - Maine, Minnesota, Iowa, Pennsylvania, and Utah have proposed prohibitions against it.
 - Illinois and Virginia, have resolutions against it, and it's only been a few months.

Reminder: 10 mrem/year is equivalent to an observation on a film badge report which could be considered "MINIMAL."

Regulatory exposure criteria have become more restrictive, costs for handling wastes continue to rise, siting is almost impossible and yet we want more energy and research. The need for energy creates potential risks.

Regarding mixed waste, the EPA has apparently ruled out delisting (or Below Permitting Control) as a viable solution. Regulations and permitting philosophy are very restrictive. It requires generator specific/waste specific applications. Generators normally do not have the staff to prepare such applications and brokers/processor applications describing a generic waste stream is not acceptable.

In talking with EPA/HQ regarding delisting possibilities, the response was "Don't waste your time;" it was almost impossible to approve.

In essence, the CHANGES by the regulatory agencies to restrict an already heavily regulated industry are inappropriate.

Federal agencies and compacts are developing restrictions to manage LLRW in their region so as to "assure" that waste is being properly handled. This implies that it currently isn't. Examples of "shooting a sparrow with a shotgun" are piling additional requirements onto the centralized waste tracking, and uniform waste manifest. The current system is adequate.

- The NRC is attempting to create relief and its spelled "BRC," but it has been a difficult task.
- The EPA seems to have the philosophy of the wild west cowboy, "The only good atom is a DEAD atom" (or molecule in the case of delisting).

Proponents for change are primarily wanting:

Regulatory changes that are more restrictive. The generators and waste brokers/processors take the traditional approach and say, "If it ain't broke, why fix it?" What happened to the basic premise that regulators should regulate with restraint? Let's not be trapped with the philosophy of let's take care of all the "what if's."

As far as the future, I feel the proponents for change (more restriction) and the proponents for tradition will begin to merge.

- EPA considers that the industry will respond no matter what the restrictions, and that probably is true.
- The number of radioactive players (processors/brokers) will decline due to the political uncertainties and over regulation of small companies.
- The price will be high, very high.
- The Compact Concept will be revisited by Congress with a result of sharing technologies between regional treatment facilities to solve the problem.
- The Congress will revisit the mixed waste problem and provide for a lead agency that can make decisions.
- BDAT will be decided by the generator.
- I believe that efforts will become more directed toward policy and decision making instead of continuous "staff studies."
- Regulators will respond to the generators in a reasonable manner. They will become a part of the solution.

- I feel that crises will happen prior to a decision-making mode that becomes the status quo.

I like Roger Scott's analogy of the riverboat. I just hope it's not headed towards rapids and even a waterfall before we reach a nice, placid stream.