



Radioactive Waste Repositories and Incentives to Local Communities

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Public acceptance of radioactive waste (RW) repository depends on various and often community-specific factors. Although radiological risk from a properly constructed low and intermediate level waste (LILW) repository is practically negligible, routine safety considerations will favor low populated areas and therefore probably underdeveloped communities. Repository acceptance in such communities is more likely to be facilitated by prospective benefits to local economy, such as infrastructure development and increased employment, as well as by dedicated financial incentives to the community.

Direct financial compensation to the local community for acceptance of the repository has been considered in some documents in countries experienced in RW management, but it has not become a widely accepted practice. In Croatia, a possibility for such compensation is mentioned in the land use plan in conjunction with the prospective RW repository site. In Slovenia, the government has already specified the annual amount of 2.33 million euro as a compensation for "limited land use" to be shared by local communities in the vicinity of the planned LILW repository during its operation.

Applicability of the Slovenian compensations to the prospective joint Slovenian-Croatian repository is not yet clear, at least in the aspect of joint funding. The joint Slovenian-Croatian *Decommissioning and LILW and SF management program for NPP Krško* from 2004 did conservatively include the compensations into the repository cost estimates, but that might not be retained in subsequent revisions of the *Program*. According to the agreement between governments of Slovenia and Croatia on the Nuclear power plant Krško, Croatian side has no obligations to participate in "public expenditures" introduced after the agreement, as would be the case of community compensations for LILW repository in Slovenia.

Before further decisions on joint NPP Krško waste management are made, including the issue of LILW repository compensations, it may be useful to analyze the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Slovenian compensations concept, and also to consider its relative significance in other communities with prospective repository sites. Relative impact to local budgets may be assessed against other approaches to increased public acceptance, such as confidence building and indirect benefits from the repository to local economies.

Keywords: RW repository, public acceptance, compensation to local community