

Quick Look Report

Travel Dates: September 22-29, 2007

Location: Oskarshamn, Sweden

Organization/Committee:

International Symposium: Final Seminar of the CARL Research Program. The CARL project brought together **Citizen** stakeholders, **Agencies** responsible for radioactive waste management, **Research** organizations, and **Licensing** and regulatory authorities.

Desired Outcome:

Represent the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/ Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC) at the final seminar of the CARL research program. Provide project participants with a broader understanding of how the results of their project comport with other international efforts, in particular the FSC. Learn from the experience of international efforts to engage stakeholders in siting and development projects for management and disposal of radioactive waste.

Results:

The desired results were achieved. My presentation, as chairman of the FSC was well received by project participants, and I was able to strengthen networks for sharing experiences for engaging stakeholders on issues of radioactive waste disposal.

Summary of Trip:

Between September 24 and September 28, 2007, I represented the OECD/NEA Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC), at a concluding seminar of the CARL International Research Project, held in Oskarshamn, Sweden. CARL is a social science research project into the effects of stakeholder involvement on decision making in radioactive waste management. The September seminar concluded the project and provided the results of a comparative study carried out in 4 countries, Belgium, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The project was funded by the implementer agencies in the four countries, with additional support from Canada and Finland.

As Chairman of the FSC, I delivered an invited presentation, "Valuing Stakeholder Involvement: Experience and Findings of the Forum on Stakeholder Confidence," (attached) that summarized FSC's methodology, findings and conclusions, to date, with regard to stakeholder confidence in waste management projects. I also chaired one of several panel discussions, and led two focus groups during the course of the meeting.

During the course of the meeting, participants learned that in late June the Scottish government officially rejected any further consultation with the UK government on deep geologic disposal of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel. Discussions may continue on issues of interim storage only. This action by the Scottish government effectively terminates years of consultations with stakeholders from communities near Scottish nuclear installations. Attending the meeting from Scotland were several

stakeholders from these communities, who expressed frustration and a sense of betrayal in their government's recent action.

Also during the meeting, it was announced that the Swedish implementer, SKB, plans to submit a license application for a geologic repository in 2009. SKB has yet to select one of two volunteer communities under consideration, Oskarshamn or Östhammar, as the final site for the proposed repository. That decision is expected in 2008.

Associated with the seminar, I participated in site visits to the Swedish Encapsulation laboratory, the Åspö hard rock laboratory (both in Oskarshamn) and the SFR low and intermediate waste disposal facility (Östhammar). At each site visit, I sought out and spoke with SKB staff members responsible for public outreach and communication, to learn about their specific challenges and accomplishment in building the confidence of local stakeholders. In Sweden, in recent years, most stakeholder interaction and outreach has been focused on the local level. I learned about efforts by national Swedish environmental organizations, who were represented at the seminar, and who participated in the field trips, to force SKB to engage on a national level and to pursue an alternative disposal concept (*i.e.* deep borehole disposal further inland, as opposed to the two coastal sites under consideration).

Generic themes that emerged from the presentations of all four project countries included:

- The value of a robust and visible regulatory presence for inspiring stakeholder confidence
- The importance of a clearly understood and transparent decision and approval process
- The (somewhat) surprising range of reaction by stakeholder groups in different countries to the role of incentives, mitigation, or community development programs offered by repository developers. Some saw them as absolutely essential before even considering hosting a waste management or disposal site. Others appeared extremely uncomfortable with the concept, likening such efforts to "selling safety" or "bribery."
- The need to "empower local stakeholders, don't just inform them"—in other words, stakeholders need to feel that investment of their time will result in concrete changes and improvements to the decision-making process and its outcome

Next Steps:

CARL project organizers expect to issue a final report in spring 2008.

Policy Issues:

No new policy issues for NRC were identified. No formal trip report will be prepared.

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