

Key messages on Issues Related to Blending

- To help mitigate the impact of the closing of the Barnwell LLW disposal facility to most generators in the U.S., industry has proposed approaches for blending of higher activity LLW (waste with Class B and C concentrations of radioactivity) with lower activity waste (Class A) to form a Class A mixture that can be disposed of in an existing facility in Utah.
- The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regulations do not prohibit blending to lower the waste classification, nor do they explicitly address it. We have published guidance that discourages blending to lower waste classification in some circumstances, but acknowledges that it is appropriate in others.
- The expanded blending proposed by industry has caused some stakeholders to question NRC's positions on blending. As a result, the Chairman has asked for a vote paper that addresses the policy issues related to blending that will need to be considered by the Commission. We plan to send the paper to the Commission in April 2010.
- An important part of our development of this vote paper will be public input on the issues associated with blending of LLW. We will be soliciting public comments in a public meeting in January 2010 and in formal written comments.
- Blending, as defined here, refers to mixing of low level radioactive waste (LLW) of different concentrations. It does not involve mixing radioactive waste with non-radioactive waste, (i.e., dilution) and concerns only waste disposal in a licensed facility, not release of radioactivity to the general environment.