

NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY

**Radioactive Waste Management Committee****CLARITY, CONFLICT AND PRAGMATISM:  
CHALLENGES IN DEFINING A ‘WILLING HOST COMMUNITY’**

*This essay focuses on the concepts of “willing potential host” and “willing host” communities in the context of radioactive waste management facility siting. Should criteria for defining these be specified as a formal component of the siting process? Professor Hank C. Jenkins-Smith draws on political science references and on examples (principally from the United States) to examine complexities associated with such definitions. In the goal of developing broadly acceptable procedures for fair, safe and effective siting, he concludes that a preferable approach would be to allow these definitions to evolve, in the context of mutual learning, over the course of the siting process.*

*Please note that this document is also available as a report in paper form as well as electronically on the NEA website: [www.oecd-nea.org/rwm/fsc](http://www.oecd-nea.org/rwm/fsc).*

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**CLARITY, CONFLICT AND PRAGMATISM:  
CHALLENGES IN DEFINING A ‘WILLING HOST COMMUNITY’**

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## **1. Introduction**

International experience in radioactive waste management (RWM) facility siting has provided the basis for development of general guidelines for the design and implementation of procedures for fair, safe and effective nuclear facility siting programs (summarized in NEA 2012). As articulated by the OECD’s Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC)<sup>3</sup> (NEA 2004a, 2004b, 2007, 2010a), the general guidelines for siting RWM facilities can be summarized as follows: selection of sites should employ a voluntary strategy in which broad criteria for technically acceptable sites are established. Communities that meet the technical criteria and who are willing to consider hosting a RWM facility are encouraged to apply. Once potential host communities are identified, siting decisions are made through iterative stages, providing the flexibility for both implementers and potential host communities to understand and adapt to contextual changes while assuring sufficient time for development of a competent and fair discourse with the host community and other stakeholders (NEA 2004b). The sequential decision stages are intended to permit programmatic and design adaptation to mutual learning over time. The potential host community has the right of veto, which if exercised will effectively end consideration of the site. Thus, upon initiation of the process only *willing potential host communities* will be considered and, upon completion of the process, only *willing host communities* will be recipients of the radioactive waste facilities.

This essay focuses on the concepts of “willing potential host” (WPH) and “willing host” (WH) communities in the context of RWM facility siting. While in broad terms these concepts have substantial appeal, specifying the criteria for designation of such communities has proved to be quite challenging

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<sup>2</sup> The FSC asked Prof. Jenkins-Smith to survey the topic and to present his findings at the FSC-12 meeting (Sept. 2011; presentation in annex). This essay is published on the FSC website as an expression of his point of view.

<sup>3</sup> The FSC was created in 2000 by the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency’s Radioactive Waste Management Committee to compile and share international experiences in addressing the societal aspects of radioactive waste management. [www.oecd-nea.org/fsc](http://www.oecd-nea.org/fsc)

(Stratos 2006). The question raised here is whether criteria for defining WPH and WH communities should be specified as a formal component of the siting process. I begin with a brief discussion of the context within which RWM facility siting takes place, then turn to some of the complexities associated with defining what we might mean by “community” and the “willingness” of communities to become the potential or actual hosts of RWM facilities. The concluding section considers how the concepts of WPH and WH communities can best be utilized in developing broadly acceptable procedures for fair, safe and effective RWM facility siting efforts.

## 2. The RWM Siting Context

In broad terms, a WPH community is understood to have opted to participate in an ongoing RWM siting process, and a WH community is understood to be a possible *outcome* of that process. As such, a decision by representatives of a locale to become either a WPH or WH community is likely to be subject to considerable attention by those who see themselves as having a stake in the outcome of the siting process. While the nature of the social and political context of RWM siting initiatives can vary greatly<sup>4</sup>, it is not unusual that the process is subject to substantial controversy in which competing interests and worldviews collide. When that is the case, organized interests, often as members of broader advocacy coalitions (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993), tend to compete across multiple policy-making venues in attempts to influence the outcome of the siting process. To the extent that the process of attaining “willingness” from a defined “community” becomes the central issue, the contention among competing interests will focus on that struggle.

In the context of extensive social and political controversy over RWM facility siting, the definitions of what constitutes a host (or potential host) *community*, and the procedures and mechanisms by which that community expresses *willingness* to participate, become the rules within which advocates and opponents can engage, much like an adversarial legal process, to influence the process outcome. These definitions will have substantial bearing on the prospects of identifying a WPH or WH community. For that reason the process by which is made the authoritative specification of these definitions and procedures will be susceptible (even likely) to become the focus of strategies by competing interests to shape the outcomes of the RWM siting process. Once specified, such definitions provide the tactical playing field within which contending forces are be able to seek to enhance or reduce the likelihood of identifying WPH and WH communities. Therefore, the inclusion of formal definitions of WPH and WH communities is likely to become contentious, and will influence the nature of the social and political struggles over the RWM facility siting process.

Of course, the degree of controversy and contention associated with RWM facility siting can vary significantly among nations and across regions within nations. Nevertheless, it is important to consider carefully the implications of formal inclusion of criteria for identifying WPH and WH communities in siting programs. Equally important, what are the implications of refraining from formal inclusion of such criteria? The subsequent sections of this essay consider first what is entailed in defining a host community,

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<sup>4</sup> In the US context, contrast the experience with the completed siting of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in southeastern New Mexico (Jenkins-Smith, Silva, Nowlin and deLozier 2011) with the stalled (and possibly terminated) siting of the Yucca Mountain HLNW facility on southern Nevada (Carter, Barrett and Rogers 2010).

then the complexities of specifying criteria for determination of whether a community is willing to be a potential or actual host for a RWM disposal facility.

### 3. Defining “Community”

Identification of WPH and WH communities will of necessity require specifying the “community” that is willing either to consider or actually host the RWM facility. Given that the facility will be located at a specific site, the *place* of the community and its geographic boundaries will be a necessary focal point. But communities are often understood to be more than places. In common usage, the community may mean those people or groups who share *common stakes* in the siting enterprise. The widespread reference to “stakeholders” and to the importance of effective engagement with stakeholders in facility siting is indicative of the centrality of this dimension of the meaning of community. Furthermore, the conception of community necessarily involves *time*; the people in a particular region or who share in the stakes of an enterprise change over time, with members joining and leaving the community. Each of these dimensions of the meaning of community – place, common stakes, and time – is therefore central to the definition of community as it applies to RWM facility siting.

**3a. Place.** The understanding of “place” has been the subject of considerable study (see, e.g., Davenport and Anderson 2005; Slovic et al. 1991). Empirical studies of the images and meanings attached to perceptions of particular places show these are elastic and may vary considerably across groups and individuals (Jenkins-Smith 2001). When place is defined formally, however, boundaries must be specified, demarking those who are – and those who are not – members of the host community. Because membership in the host community generally endows one with standing<sup>5</sup> in the decision to become a potential host to the RWM facility, drawing the boundaries that determine membership are understandably controversial.

Case studies of efforts to site potentially hazardous facilities point to the difficulties in reaching consensus about which boundaries properly demark the WPH community (Stratos, Ltd. 2006). A typical problem concerns the expression of dissent by those who are outside the boundaries of the putative WPH community, but who nevertheless see themselves as affected by the siting activity. In the case of efforts to site a temporary spent nuclear fuel facility on the Skull Valley Goshute Reservation in Utah (USA), the nearest major city and the State of Utah objected on the basis of potential hazards associated with transport to the site (among other reasons). In the case of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico (USA), one of the primary concerns of the public was transportation of the materials to the waste site, leading to

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<sup>5</sup> By standing, I mean the right to directly participate or be formally represented in the process of determining whether the community will become host to the RWM facility.

substantial consultation with residents and public officials from communities along the transportation route (Holm 2011; Jenkins-Smith, Silva, Nowlin and deLozier 2011).

The definition of boundaries is further complicated within federal governmental systems, in which authorities are distributed across national, regional (or state), and local governments. Within federal systems, local jurisdictions (e.g., cities, towns, villages and counties) are nested within regional (state) and national (or tribal) governments. Thus the prospective RWM facility is “hosted” not only by those in the local jurisdictional boundaries, but by those within the regional and national jurisdictional boundaries as well. In the US, RWM siting processes have been significantly complicated by these nested boundaries, resulting in calls for a greater role for states and tribes (see, e.g., Moore 2011; Chestnut et al. 2011).

In contentious siting cases, advocates may struggle to stretch and constrict the specification of the PWH community boundaries to advantage their position. Opponents of a RWM facility siting may, for example, attempt to raise concerns among residents in adjacent or transport corridor communities, and seek to have those residents’ voices included in determination of “willingness” of the host community. Representatives of the state of Nevada did just that in raising the concern of reduced property values along transport routes in the event that the Yucca Mountain repository in southern Nevada were to be licensed to receive used fuel from nuclear reactors across the US (Gawande and Jenkins-Smith 2001). In other instances, it is conceivable that adjacent communities will seek to be included within the boundaries of the “host community” in order to be able to share in the possible benefits provided upon siting the facility. Either way, the intent is to stretch or constrict the boundaries of the PWH to advantage advocates on one side or another in the siting debate.<sup>6</sup>

In summary, the primary import for purposes of defining WPH and WH communities is that drawing boundaries is necessarily an artifact of the siting process, and contending participants in that process will have incentives to manipulate those boundaries in ways to advantage their own objectives.

**3b. Common Stakes:** Definitions of “community” draw on the recognition of common stakes, in which obtaining benefits (or avoiding losses) for the larger group requires that individuals join into the community to achieve common aims. By this definition, communities may require that individuals accept restraints on their choices and behavior in return for the benefits made possible by membership within the community. The classic “problem of the commons” identifies the class of situations in which unrestrained pursuit of individual interests results in losses for the entire community (Hardin 1968). This situation can

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<sup>6</sup> The struggle over boundaries is of course not unique to siting debates. In representative politics, the redrawing of boundaries to advantage one candidate or political party over another has a venerable history, extending to modern times (see, e.g., Johnston 2002).

be addressed (though not necessarily resolved) through institutions that mandate collective decision-making by those who have common stakes in the outcome (Ostrom 1990).

When applied to RWM facility siting, the authority to site a facility is seen as appropriately residing in the broader community because individual interests (e.g., in financial benefits received by an individual property owner in return for siting a facility) may not align with those of others who are affected by the decision (e.g., potential health hazards and possible economic losses due to stigma). The difficulty in taking into account “common stakes” resides in determining which individuals or groups have *enough* of a stake in the outcome, and therefore are legitimate members of the affected community.

The commonality of stakes is related to boundaries of place in that people living in close proximity to a potential site for a RWM facility are presumed to have significant interests in the siting decision. However the stakes in question need not be related exclusively to proximity; the interests may be grounded in economic, professional, aesthetic, religious, or ideological bases (among others). The perception that a RWM facility may stigmatize agricultural production in adjacent regions, that professional norms and responsibilities may be engaged, or that spiritual or societal values are affected can all be the basis for individuals and groups to define themselves as part of the affected community.

One important implication is that perceptions of appropriate community boundaries based on commonality of stakes are likely to differ across groups and individuals, and these different perceptions will likely result in contentious interactions during the siting process. In particular, attempts to define the WPH and WH community purely through proximity and place are likely to be challenged by those who see themselves as members of the relevant community by virtue of non-place based criteria.<sup>7</sup>

**3c. Time:** The members of a WPH community will not be static. Even in the relatively short-term (e.g., periods of a decade or less), individual members will enter and leave the vicinity of the facility due to mobility, mortality and new births. Given that the siting process can be quite lengthy (spanning periods of over a decade), the size and composition of the WPH community may change significantly.

Some of changes over time in the WPH community may result from dynamics introduced by the initiation of the siting process. It is possible that the initiation of the siting process will change the composition of the WPH community, as employment in private and public organizations associated with the process and potential facility draws new members to the community. These effects will be more

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<sup>7</sup> The case of the efforts of the Skull Valley Goshute Band to site a temporary spent nuclear fuel storage facility on their reservation, as noted earlier, provides a pertinent example. In response to the initiative by the Skull Valley Band, the Confederated Tribes of Goshute Indians (a separate, federally-recognized tribe), residing at considerable distance from the Skull Valley Band Reservation, weighed in against the proposed siting. The connection is that the Confederated Tribes share cultural and some family ties with the Skull Valley Band (Stratos Inc., 2006).

pronounced if the population of the WPH community is initially relatively small, and if the RWM facility and associated activities comprise a relatively large fraction of the employment base.

At the same time, should the community become widely perceived to be associated with the RWM facility (or more generally with nuclear activities), the images of the place held by those outside the community are likely to change in ways that may affect migration into and out of the community. In the extreme, the introduction of “nuclear images” associated with the facility may stigmatize the place to those who perceived radioactive waste to be particularly dangerous or noxious (Slovic et al. 1991). The overall pattern of images of the place can thus act as a filter affecting those who chose to migrate into, or to avoid, the WPH community (Jenkins-Smith 2001). Over time the net effect may be to alter the perceptions of the risks, benefits and general acceptability of nuclear facilities within the WPH community.<sup>8</sup> This raises important questions about what it means for a community to be “willing.” What happens when and if willingness changes over time? Communities may become more or less willing over time, and in part this change in willingness may result from dynamics introduced by the siting process itself. What are the implications for investments in the science for a particular site, infrastructure, and compromises made by the WPH and the agency responsible for siting?

The very long time-spans over which radioactive materials can remain hazardous mean that the WH community for a sited RWM facility will necessarily include many future generations. The available evidence suggests that most current residents of WPH communities are able to consider the interests of those only several generations hence (Drottz-Sjöberg 2010). For that reason, a significant part of the host community (distant generations not yet born) cannot be consulted on siting decisions, and current generations are not reliable representatives of the interests of these distant future community members.

In summary, the composition of a WPH community is dynamic over the span of time in which a siting process is likely to occur, and the siting process itself may influence the nature of those changes. The much longer time spans associated with the functions of a sited RWM facility ensure that the host community will change greatly, and the influence of the facility on that change may be significant.

#### **4. Reflections on the Meaning of a “Willing” Community**

Setting aside the question of boundaries of the community, what would constitute evidence of willingness on the part of that community to host a RWM facility? The FSC has recommended a process intended to facilitate the development of competence and mutual trust necessary for community members to determine whether they are willing to host the facility (NEA 2004b). It is recommended that decisions

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<sup>8</sup> This dynamic is part of the basis for viewing *de facto* nuclear host communities as potentially attractive hosts for RWM facilities. See Greenberg 2009.



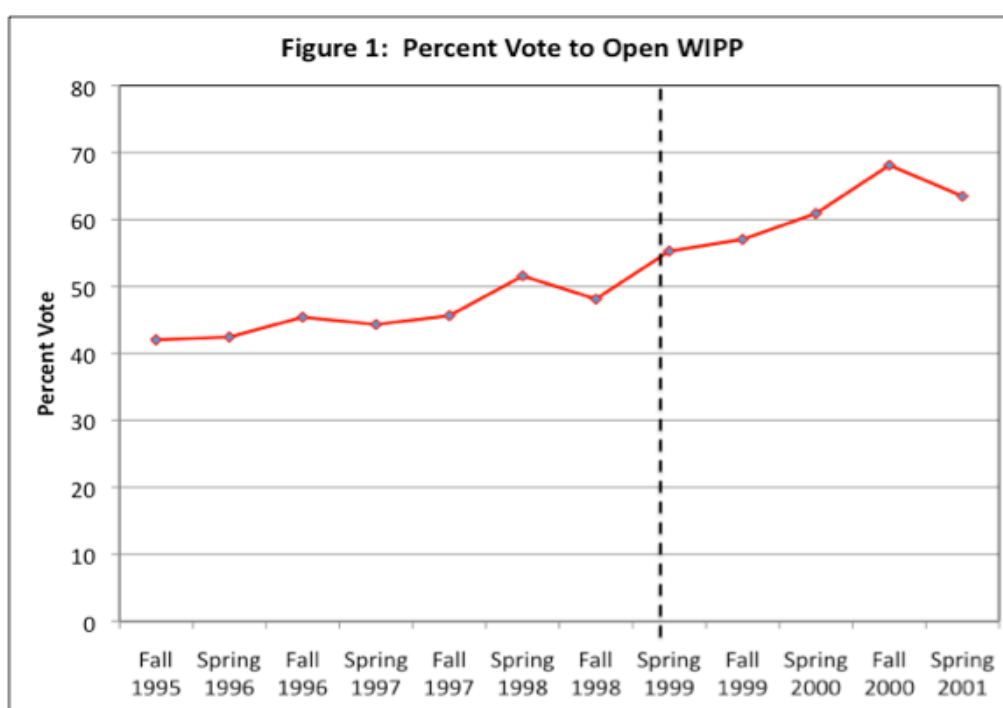
be taken through iterative stages, providing members of the host community (as well as the siting authority) the flexibility to understand and adapt to contextual changes. This stepwise approach is intended to provide sufficient time for development of a competent and fair discourse with members of the host community and other stakeholders. The sequential decision stages also allow for programmatic and design adaptation to new learning over time. Overall the iterative, staged and interactive process is intended to result in a community that is prepared to express an informed, reasoned and competent response. The question is, once the process has prepared the members of the community to respond, what should constitute legitimate evidence of collective willingness of the community members to host the facility?

Collective choices of this kind can be expressed indirectly, through representatives, or directly via such mechanisms as citizen referenda. In representative political systems, elected or appointed political officials tend to make most of the decisions of this kind. Ideally, representatives will campaign for office based on positions taken on issues of importance to the electorate, and the winners will be those whose positions best reflect the preferences of the voters. The difficulty is that elected officials make choices over a wide range of issues, and therefore candidates for office (or the parties that present a slate of candidates) must present portfolios of positions (Downs 1957). Positions on RWM facility siting may or may not rise to prominence in these portfolios. Moreover, the nature of voting processes introduces sufficient complexities into collective decision-making that it is difficult – if not impossible – to smoothly translate individual level preferences into authoritative collective choice (Riker 1982).

The contentious nature of issues involving nuclear materials (and other technologies subject to high risk perceptions) has resulted in suggestions that traditional governance structures are incapable of managing the conflict in an equitable, effective and consensual manner (Slovic 1993; Renn 2008). The result has been increasing reliance on more consensual and participatory approaches to nuclear facility siting, particularly in Europe (Sundqvist and Elam 2010). A number of innovative public involvement mechanisms have evolved (see Holm 2010 for examples from the US case). The question of how well the new participatory mechanisms will fit within the fundamental national political institutions remains an open question (Jenkins-Smith 2011).

Efforts have been made to characterize fair and reasonable methods to measure acceptance of RWM facilities within potential host communities (see, for example, Frey and Oberholzer-Gee 1996). While a number of methods (including reverse auctions, contingent valuation surveys, and others) hold promise, in order for the measure to be meaningful the method employed must be seen by community

members as a legitimate mechanisms for expression of preferences (Silva 1998).<sup>9</sup> The result is that, while many means of measuring willingness are available, the primary measure used and accepted has been a referendum-type survey measure employing representative survey samples.<sup>10</sup> Survey approaches, in particular, have the advantages of providing a statistically valid representative sample of responses from the potential host community; of being able to track changes in willingness over time; and of exploring the underlying reasons for expression of preferences regarding the RWM facility siting among community members. For example, Figure 1 shows the percentage of the residents of New Mexico who supported opening the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), a deep geologic repository for transuranic wastes, over time (the Figure is taken from Jenkins-Smith, Silva, Nowlin and deLozier 2011).



As is evident from Figure 1, public willingness to accept the WIPP facility changed over time. In 1995, when the WIPP debate had already been under way for over a decade, the percentage of survey respondents who supported opening WIPP was less than a majority – at about 42%. By the time the facility opened in 1999 the percentage support had risen to about 56%, and it continued to rise to over 60% by the year 2000. While a number of factors explain these changes (see Jenkins-Smith, Silva, Nowlin and deLozier 2011), the salient point is that New Mexicans’ preferences to open the facility (or keep it open) varied substantially over time.

<sup>9</sup> Silva (1998) demonstrates that measures that rely on market measures (such as hypothetical auctions or willingness to pay) will systematically influence expressed acceptance of the facility. Generally speaking, if the mechanism itself is not seen as legitimate, the expressed valuation (acceptance) is lowered.

<sup>10</sup> Other measures are “support/opposition” scales that can both measure preferences and the strength of those preferences (Jenkins-Smith, Herron and Silva 2011).

The variation in support over time raises the question of *when* a community's expression of willingness to host a RWM facility should be considered authoritative. In the WIPP case, a majority of the public expressed opposition to the facility well before the facility was completed. Even stronger state-wide public opposition was evident in Nevada for the proposed Yucca Mountain HLNW repository. But if support rises as a facility nears completion, as did that for WIPP, should early public opposition be decisive in opting out of the RWM facility siting process?

Measured support for WIPP also varied significantly within the state of New Mexico. Support for the facility was strongest among those whose homes were close to the WIPP site in Eddy and Lea Counties in southern New Mexico. Opposition was greatest in northern New Mexico, in Santa Fe and Taos Counties, which are at substantial distance from the site.

The point is that, even with relatively simple measures such as the referenda questions asked in the WIPP surveys, the determination of whether a community is willing to host the facility is likely to be dependent on when the question is asked and on the boundaries within which the question is asked. The WIPP data shown in Figure 1 could be taken to indicate that public preferences should be seen as indicative willingness only when the decision is ripe – meaning that the siting process had had time to run its course and relevant regulatory agencies had determined that the facility could safely dispose of transuranic wastes. But a siting process that first relied on communities to express willingness to be considered (that is, to opt to become a WPH community), well before a full site characterization and safety assessment can be completed, might have precluded New Mexico from consideration if the community was defined as the entire state. Acceptance would have been more likely if the expression of willingness were required more locally (e.g., from the City of Carlsbad).

In summary, reliance on measurement of public willingness to enter into the siting process requires consideration of who is asked (raising the boundary issues discussed in Section 3, above) and when they are to be asked to express that willingness. Both of these considerations are likely to be contentious, because advocates and opponents of RWM facility siting will understand that how these issues are handled will substantially influence the prospects for siting the facility.

## **5. Considerations and Conclusions**

This essay began by reflecting on how a community can be defined for purposes of identifying a potential host for a RWM facility, and then turned to the question of how willingness to host a facility would be registered. In both cases it is clear that, while the identification of WPH and WH communities has conceptual appeal, there are substantial ambiguities in how the community will be defined and how

(and when) willingness can be meaningfully expressed. Moreover, those who advocate for and who oppose the RWM facility siting will understand that the definition of the community and the determination of willingness have immediate and substantial implications for their positions. Therefore, formal efforts to answer these questions are very likely to be vigorously contested, and (as with elections) the contending advocates will lobby for conclusions that advantage their own positions.

Of course, the siting process need not call for a formal and explicit *a priori* definition for either the community or of the mechanisms by which that community makes expression of willingness to be a host. A less formal approach would not avoid the ambiguities of meaning nor the prospect for contention, but it would permit the process design to encourage the relevant stakeholders to understand the implications and find solutions relevant to their own context and circumstances. Indeed, it is likely that national and local cultural norms will differ significantly across potential sites, and that these will be important for arriving at consensus regarding both the definition of the host community and broadly acceptable means of expression of willingness. Furthermore the process could be designed to allow for the identification of the host community to evolve in real time as the siting process unfolds; as the iterative and staged siting process increases knowledge among participants, it is likely that participants will want to reconsider who is a member of the host community and how consent to host should be expressed. By this approach, only very general guidance, over a range of options, would be provided. For example, an array of criteria for defining the boundaries and membership in the host community could be provided, with open discussion of the implications for the outcomes of the siting process. In this way all participants – and not just seasoned advocates – would be in a position to understand the implications of the choices made. The playing field remains, but it would be a more nearly level playing field.

Overall, the intent of the siting process is to provide a context in which potential hosts can come to recognize the implications of RWM facility siting in a manner that does not prematurely preclude learning and deliberation. The process should allow a balanced assessment of the benefits – including both localized benefits and service to the larger society – as well as the costs as they are spread across different conceptions of hosts of the facility. But the process should be explicit about avoiding designs that unnecessarily exacerbate conflict and polarize those engaged in the debate. In RWM facility siting cases, strong, well-organized and vocal opposition can make expression of support – no matter how tentative – very difficult (Noelle-Nuemann 1974).<sup>11</sup> Attempting at the outset of the process to provide for formal definitions of the host community and the means by which that community expresses willingness to accept

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<sup>11</sup> The same can be said for support, but the tilt in risk perceptions (referred to elsewhere as a perceptual “risk ratchet”), gives a clear advantage to nuclear facility opponents in RWM siting debates (Jenkins-Smith and Silva 1998).

the RWM facility is very likely to exacerbate conflict. A preferable approach would therefore be to allow these definitions to evolve, in the context of mutual learning, over the course of the RWM siting process.

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**ANNEX: PRESENTATION BY PROFESSOR HANK C. JENKINS-SMITH TO THE 12TH  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE FORUM ON STAKEHOLDER CONFIDENCE, SEPT. 2011**

**Clarity, Conflict and Pragmatism:  
Challenges in Defining a 'Willing  
Host Community'**

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FSC-12 Sept. 2011

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## Discussion Overview

- Considerations of institutional and policy context
- How are “willing potential host communities” defined?
- How is “willingness” of a willing host community to be authoritatively registered
- Implications for the RWM facility siting process

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## Contextual Issues

- Siting cases will vary with respect to:
  - The nature of authoritative collective decision making institutions
  - The degree of controversy attached to nuclear siting issues
  - The extent and match of pre-existing communities
- A siting process provides the rules and norms that facilitate, constrain, and focus the effort by which a community to decides whether to become a WHC
  - Definition of community and determination of consent can be critical
  - In high conflict cases, these definitions will shape the tactical playing field for advocates

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## Defining a “Community”

- Communities defined by *Place*
  - Boundaries as artifacts
    - The problem of excluded groups and tactical gaming
- Communities defined by *Common Stakes*
  - Group values define membership in potential host community
    - How much of a stake is required to have standing?
    - Who arbitrates across competing stakes?
- Communities over *Time*
  - Changes in community leaders and members over time via migration, death, birth
  - Changes within a population
    - Internal and external change
    - Change resulting from the siting process itself

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## Determination of “Willingness”

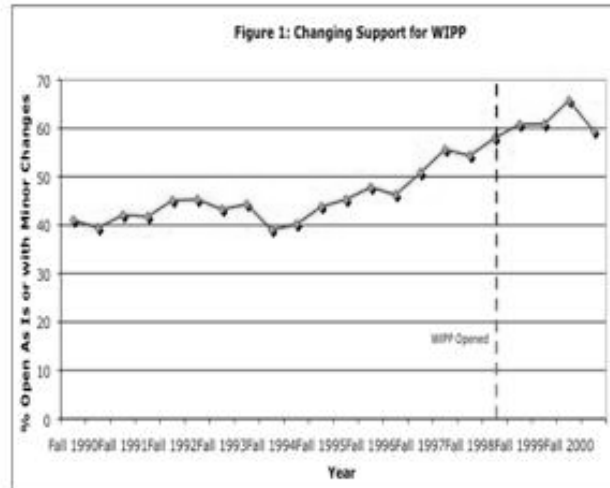
- A stepwise approach is intended to provide sufficient time and resources for development of a competent and fair discourse with members of the host community and other stakeholders. What then?
  - What should constitute legitimate evidence of collective willingness of the community members to host the facility?
  - Traditional methods: representation and referenda
    - Complexities of nuclear facility siting have led both US and EU scholars to call for alternative siting mechanisms (e.g. Renn, Slovic)
    - The problem of legitimacy

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## Tracking Willingness

- Most appropriate method is high quality survey research
  - Representative of community
  - Track changes over time
  - Permit analysis of underlying reasons for changes
  - Example from the case of WIPP



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## Challenges to Determining Willingness

- *When* is willingness ascertained?
  - Willingness (or support) can fluctuate substantially over time
  - US cases suggest that early measurement will tilt toward rejection
  - How does one judge that the potential community is ready to make a determination?
- *Where* is willingness ascertained?
  - The NIMBY conundrum
    - Reversal process over policy debate
  - The New Mexico case
    - Enthusiastic support near the facility
    - Strident opposition far to the north

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## Implications for Process

- The effects of a requirement for *a priori* definitions of a WHC and of the means by which willingness is expressed depend on context
  - committed advocates will utilize them for tactical manipulation
- A less formal approach would still have ambiguities of meaning and the prospect for contention, but...
  - it would permit the process design to encourage the relevant stakeholders to understand the implications and find definitions relevant to their own context and circumstances

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## Learning and Adaptation

- The process should be explicit about avoiding designs that unnecessarily exacerbate conflict and polarize those engaged in the debate
- The FSC has emphasized the need for an iterative, adaptive process for siting
  - This kind of iterative approach can allow for the identification of the host community to evolve in real-time as the siting process unfolds
    - Participants may want to reconsider who is a member of the host community, and how consent to host should be expressed
  - Only very general guidance, over a range of options, would be necessary
    - Leveling up the playing field for new as well as seasoned participants

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