



## A Message From Secretary Davis

Federal law makes each state responsible for the disposal of low-level radioactive wastes generated within its borders. To fulfill this responsibility, state law directs the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) to see that a new disposal facility is built. Accordingly, DER has hired a private company (Chem-Nuclear Systems, Inc.) to site, develop, and operate one low-level radioactive waste disposal facility in the Commonwealth, which will operate for 30 years. DER oversees and regulates all of Chem-Nuclear's activities.

State law also charges DER with making sure low-level radioactive wastes are managed in a way that protects public health and the environment. Pennsylvania's regulations, developed with extensive public input, contain some of the most stringent and unique requirements in the country. The regulations specify an open site selection process, engineered barriers, extensive environmental monitoring, and local control of operations.

A statewide screening process is underway to identify potentially suitable sites. To date, approximately 75% of the state has been eliminated from further consideration as a potential site for the low-level radioactive waste disposal facility. In early 1995, three potentially suitable sites for the low-level radioactive waste disposal facility will be recommended for further study.

DER recognizes that the siting of a disposal facility may raise concerns among the residents of the potential host community. This brochure is being distributed statewide to provide basic information on what low-level radioactive waste is and how the disposal facility will be sited, designed, operated, and regulated to ensure the safe management of low-level radioactive wastes.

I urge you to learn more about the program for safe low-level radioactive waste management. We believe that the best location for this facility is a site that meets stringent technical requirements within a community that is familiar with the facility's operation and commitment to long-term safety. Please work with us to make that happen.

Sincerely,

ARTHUR A. DAVIS

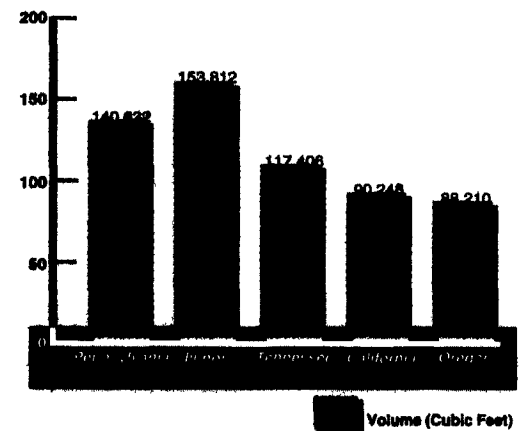
Secretary, Department of Environmental Resources

## A National Perspective...

Pennsylvania is one of the largest generators of low-level radioactive waste in the country. Currently, all of Pennsylvania's low-level waste goes to one facility in South Carolina.

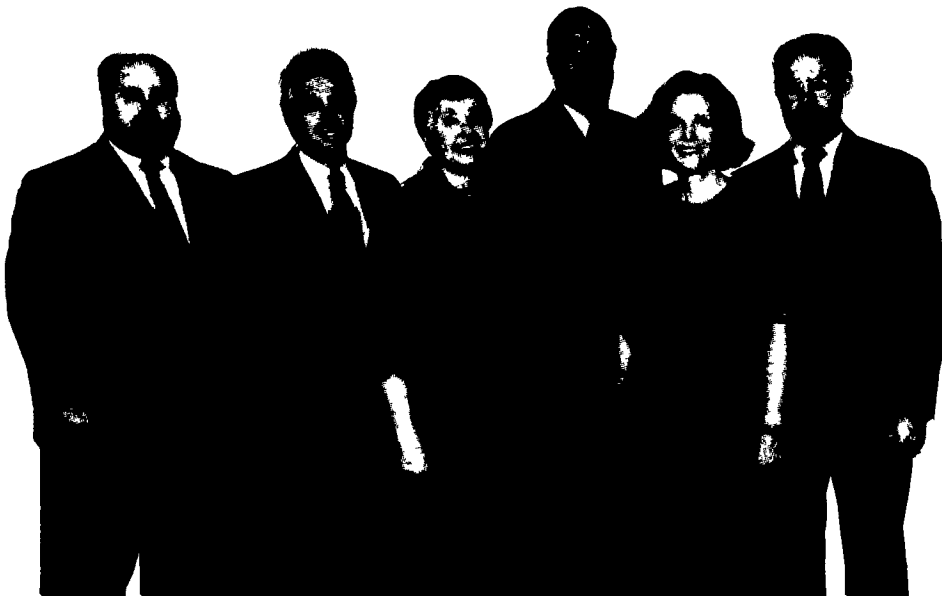
Pennsylvania will develop one new disposal facility to safely manage this waste.

1987-1992 Low-Level Waste Disposed at All Disposal Sites for Top 5 Generating States (Average)



Source: U.S. Department of Energy, 1993.

## MEET THE PARTICIPANTS



Left to right: Marc Tenan, Executive Director of the Appalachian States Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission; William Dornstife, Director of DER's Bureau of Radiation Protection; Charlotte Glauser, Former Chair\* of DER's Low-Level Waste Advisory Committee; Michael Murphy, head of DER's low-level waste regulatory unit; Catherine Cowan, DER's Deputy Secretary for Air and Waste Management; Steve Jones, DER's low-level waste section chief.

\* Mr. Leonard Hess was elected Chair of DER's Low-Level Waste Advisory Committee on January 24, 1994.

It takes a strong, capable team to safely manage low-level radioactive waste. Key to the team are members of the Department of Environmental Resources' (DER) Low-Level Radioactive Waste Regulatory Program. State law directs DER to oversee, license, and regulate the private disposal facility operator. DER regulatory team members — health physicists, engineers, geologists — must be satisfied that the facility will be safe before an operating license is issued. Chem-Nuclear Systems, Inc. (Chem-Nuclear), the private firm that is developing the low-level waste disposal facility, must obtain a license from DER before building and operating the facility.

The Environmental Quality Board maintains an independent evaluation role and must formally approve potentially suitable disposal facility sites proposed by Chem-Nuclear before the firm can proceed to study them in detail. The board has 21 members, including citizens, representatives of the General Assembly, and representatives of 12 Commonwealth agencies. The board will hold public meetings and public hearings to obtain public comments before reaching a decision on the potential disposal sites.

Additional citizen involvement in the DER program is ensured through the active participation of the 23 member DER Low-Level Waste Advisory Committee. Representing government, industry, and civic and special interest groups, the committee has helped DER to develop strong regulations, evaluate and select sites, and oversee Chem-Nuclear's work.

Pennsylvania is the host state for the disposal facility to meet the disposal needs of four states. Maryland, Delaware and West Virginia join Pennsylvania in the Appalachian States Compact. By far the largest generator of low-level waste in the group, Pennsylvania must host the first disposal facility. Because of its lead role, Pennsylvania chairs the Appalachian States Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission and it has two extra commission members. Once a site is selected, a host municipality representative will be appointed to the Commission by the Governor.

"Pennsylvania has the toughest law and regulations in the United States, due principally to active public participation."

- Leonard Hess, Chair, DER Low-Level Waste Advisory Committee

