

Youngberg questions safety of waste shipment

By Chris Burbach

Lincoln City Council member Eric Youngberg outlined his proposal regarding the proposed shipment of spent nuclear fuel through Lincoln and the UNL campus at a Wednesday night forum sponsored by the Government Liaison Committee.

Youngberg used a slide-tape presentation to outline many of his concerns. There are two types of radioactive waste, Youngberg said, low-level contaminated trash and high-level spent fuel, the latter of which is the type of waste that would be shipped through Lincoln.

The material must be shipped because room for temporary on-site storage is running out, Youngberg indicated in the presentation.

Youngberg said he is concerned about the safety of the casks that would carry the waste. The casks have been tested only by computer simulation and scale models, which is not enough, he said. The slide presentation listed the tests a cask must endure: a 30-foot drop onto pavement, a 30-minute fire at 1,400 degrees Fahrenheit, a 40-inch drop onto a steel stump and submersion in water for three hours.

Dave Smith, a UNL student and Burlington Northern employee, also spoke. Representatives from the Nebraska Public Power District were invited, but were not present. However, NPPD did send materials that expressed their belief that the proposed containers for the shipments are sufficient and are designed to withstand an accident scenario.

However, a National Transportation Safety Board study found that "no tests have proven that the casks could stand an accident in the real world," according to Youngberg's presentation.

Youngberg said he is concerned about the closeness of the shipment route to Lincoln residences and business. Smith, who would be directly involved with the

shipments, said there are people living within 100 yards of the proposed route. That group of people includes the residents of Harper-Schramm-Smith residence halls on the UNL campus.

Youngberg outlined his proposed ordinance dealing with the waste shipments, which he will present to the Lincoln City Council at a public hearing on Monday. The ordinance is based on the idea that NPPD should bear the burden of proof that the shipments are safe, Youngberg said.

The ordinance would require that the mayor be given a 45-day notice in advance of such details of the route as who the shipper is, how the shipments are to be made, exactly what materials are being shipped, and the start and end point of the route through Lincoln.

The ordinance also would require a public hearing 15 days in advance of the shipments. Conditions which would have to be met at the hearing include:

- The material must be packaged and labeled properly.
- Alternatives must be shown, and it must be clear that there is no feasible alternative to transporting the waste through the city.
- The Nuclear Regulatory Commission must explain why the city shouldn't have jurisdiction over the shipping.
- Liability insurance must be provided.
- Containers must be properly tested.
- Provisions must be made to notify local officials.

Youngberg stressed that his concern about waste transportation wasn't resistance to nuclear power in general; the Cooper plant, near Brownville, is extremely cost efficient, he said. The two issues should be treated separately, he said.

Government Liaison Committee members also proposed a resolution expressing student concern about the shipments to ASUN Wednesday.



Eric Youngberg

Staff photo by Craig Andresen

Warner: Regents' function would change very little under legislative control

By Jeff Goodwin

Sen. Jerome Warner of Waverly said Wednesday morning that LR5, a proposed constitutional amendment giving the Legislature the power to direct the UNL Board of Regents, would have a minimal effect on its operation.

"I don't know that it isn't control that we already have, if we want to use it," Warner said. "It's presumed by most people that we can do very little. The truth is we have chosen to do very little."

Warner spoke at a breakfast sponsored by ASUN's Government Liaison Committee and the College of Business Administration's Advisory Board.

LR5, introduced by Omaha Sen. Karen Kilgarrin, is "more of an emotional issue than a factual one," Warner said. "I don't see any great calamity if it passes and I don't see any great calamity if it doesn't pass."

The Legislature already has a degree of control over the regents in its power to appropriate funds for the university, the senator said.

"There's no limit on how money shall be used or should be used," he said.

He warned that there is a danger that legislators also could abuse their power. He cited the case of a senator a few years ago, who, because one of his constituents

was angry at a professor, tried to get the budget for that professor's department eliminated from the university's budget.

Warner explained his support of LB 410, a bill he introduced that would allocate money raised from the cigarette tax to the University Building Renovation Fund.

He said various groups press for new buildings to be built that serve the interests of those groups.

"I think it's far more important to renovate some of these other buildings," he said. "I have a feeling that otherwise it will continue to be deferred in favor of new projects."

Warner said LB211, Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers' bill to classify football players as university employees, had very little chance of passing.

"I'm sure it will not pass," he said. "I doubt that we can afford to pay them (football players) what their talents are worth."

Warner also said he favors LB56, which would raise Nebraska's drinking age to 21.

"It doesn't bother me at all to raise it to 21," he said, adding that he believes a higher drinking age would result in less arrests for drunken driving.

"All the statistics I have seen certainly seem to indicate that," he said.

SPECIAL CHILDREN

Program helps accommodate kids with learning disabilities

By Bill Allen

In a junior high school classroom a child sits lost because of mild retardation or some other learning disability.

In the past this student might have been overlooked or never allowed to reach full potential, but the teachers couldn't really be blamed.

Without proper training or resources, the teacher might have been unable to spend the time needed to help these children. So those with handicaps might be left behind, or routed into special classes where they stagnated, both academically and socially.

Helping those students is the aim of the federally funded Accommodate program, project director Stanley Vasa said.

Vasa, an associate professor of special education, and program coordinator Allen Steckelberg run the 3-year, \$150,000 project from the Barkley Memorial Cen-

ter on East Campus at 42nd and Holdrege streets.

"The purpose of the program is accommodating mildly handicapped students into regular classrooms," Vasa said. "Basically, what we're doing is bringing together 30 teachers and training them."

Vasa said teachers across the state make the expense-paid trip to Lincoln on a regular basis to participate in teaching workshops.

The 30 teachers work in five areas, including English, business administration, math, home economics and science.

Four main areas the Accommodate program deals with are:

- information about the various roles of a teacher.
- adapting and selecting various proper materials for instruction.
- instructional strategies.
- behavior management.

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