Communication and participation:

Why, how, when, and with whom in a SNF/HLW transportation system to address social and economic impacts

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Key points

- Transportation systems can cause disproportionate social and economic impacts to certain, more vulnerable communities.
- Attention needs to be given to how things are done (process) as well as what happens (outcomes).
- Context matters.
Social and economic impacts

- Direct impacts vs. secondary impacts

- Direct impacts from a transportation system
  - E.g., increased exposures to risks, costs, noise.
Social and economic impacts

- Individual and group behaviors are influenced by judgments about risks and risk management systems — *positively or negatively.*

- Direct impacts on a transportation system
  - E.g., increased costs, inadequate resources, “over-building” system, reduction in vigilance

- Secondary impacts from a transportation system
  - E.g., decrease in property values, stigma, infrastructure development, effects on national energy policy, lack of attention to other serious risks

- Impacts are *not* evenly distributed
  - Disproportionate impacts to vulnerable/marginalized groups.
Communication and participation

Can risk communication and public participation:

- Improve outputs?
  - improve analyses, recommendations, plans, decisions?

- Improve outcomes?
  - improve operational performance?
  - Improve emergency response capabilities?
  - improve institutional learning?
  - mitigate direct and secondary impacts?
Risk communication

- Provide (technical) information about risk sources, risk severity, and/or risk management (to non-technical audience).

- A range of possibilities…
  - “One way” to “two way”
  - From “giving information to” to “having a dialogue with”
Public participation

- A variety of definitions and terms:
  - Public participation/involvement
  - Stakeholder participation
    - EPA: federal stakeholders vs. non-federal stakeholders
  - Collaboration

The basic idea:
Enable interested and affected parties to have voice and influence in research, planning, decision making, monitoring, or evaluation.
Key questions

- *Why* have communication and participation?
- *When* should there be communication and participation?
- *Who* should be part of a communication and participation effort?
- *How* should communication and participation efforts be designed?
- There can be disputes about all of these…
Context of the program can influence opportunities, needs, choices....

- Complex institutional framework (federal, state, local coordination, multiple agencies and private contractors at all levels)
- Confidence in DOE as lead agency
- Yucca Mountain repository, national energy policy, and nuclear weapons program as backdrops
- National program with local actors (emergency responders)
- National program with potential for varied impacts
- Varied communities (urban, rural, EJ)
- Value conflicts (tolerable level of exposures, risks of accidents)
- Uncertainties (in risk assessments and models, in potential for social and economic impacts, budgets)
- Relevance of past experience for future
- Security needs
- Urgency to planning
Why have communication and participation?

- Multiple, perhaps conflicting, purposes and goals possible.
- Purposes are often disputed.
- Unclear goals can cause confusion and raise expectations that will not be met.
- Important links between goals for information sharing (communication) and participation.
Purposes and goals of risk communication

- To persuade?
- To inform?
  - for personal action or social decision making?
- To improve understandings?
  - for personal action or social decision making?
- To create dialogue about choices?
Purposes and goals of public participation

- Instrumental
- Substantive
- Normative
- Agency policies and guidelines
  - DOE, OCRWM, DOT, NRC...
When should there be communication and participation?

- When its best to communicate or provide opportunities for participation is often disputed.
- What are legal requirements (e.g., NEPA)?
- What phase in a program?
  - During risk assessment…or…risk management?
  - During problem formulation, process design, selecting options and outcomes, information gathering (including research), synthesis of information, decision making?
  - During planning and decision-making, operations, monitoring/evaluation/oversight?
Who should be part of a communication and participation effort?

- Who should be provided information is often disputed.
- Who should be able to participate is often contested.
- Focus on institutional/organizational stakeholder representatives (e.g., elected officials, Tribes, private industry) or all interested and affected parties?
- Vulnerable/marginalized populations, environmental justice (fewer resources, less trust, less access to expertise and process)
How should communication and participation efforts be designed?

- Structure and content of risk communication are often disputed.
  - Source of information?
  - Ways to provide and share information (e.g., meetings, brochures, use of the internet)?
  - Framing and content of information?
    - Range of points of view, uncertainties, etc.?
  - Who are the audiences for the information and parties to deliberation?
  - Integrating marginalized groups?
  - Implemented by DOE? Independently of DOE?
How should communication and participation efforts be designed?

- Structure and content of public participation efforts are often disputed.
  - Agenda setting?
  - Access to information?
  - Analysis of information?
  - Access to process?
  - Integrating analysis and deliberation?
  - Decision making rules?
  - Accountability?
  - Resources (staff, funding)?
  - Implemented by DOE? Independently of DOE?