ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

Northwest Colorado CBS Engagement

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This report was written and submitted by Matt Solomon, Project Manager,
Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative, 970.376.2146, matt@MattSolomon.org

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Executive Summary

The Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative (NCEI), operating under the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC), led a regional engagement effort to assess local perspectives on collaboration-based siting (CBS) for spent nuclear fuel. With funding from the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA), this project set out to understand the conditions under which Northwest Colorado communities might consider participation in future federal siting processes. The goal was not to advocate for any outcome but to ensure that community voices shape early-phase dialogue with clarity and credibility.

This effort builds on the region's broader transition away from coal. With mine and plant closures on the horizon, regional leaders are seeking durable alternatives that support both economic development and long-term resilience. At the same time, growing bipartisan support for nuclear energy, evolving state policy positions, and increasing federal attention to siting pathways created a timely opportunity to begin structured, community-led conversations about CBS.

NCEI conducted structured work sessions with local officials and stakeholders across seven jurisdictions. These discussions were guided by standardized questions and supplemented by follow-up correspondence to capture additional input. The process emphasized trust, transparency, and relevance, giving participants the space to raise concerns, surface opportunities, and identify what support or information would be needed to assess potential CBS participation.

Key themes and opportunities emerged. These included calls for a greater accessibility to information from the Department of Energy, a tiered model for host community roles, documentation of past DOE relationships, and greater alignment with legal and regulatory reforms, and recent Supreme Court decisions narrowing NEPA review. The upcoming DOE NE-83 Expression of Interest presents a timely inflection point: will Northwest Colorado respond with coordinated proposals that reflect its readiness, and will federal agencies match that commitment with resources and partnership?

This report reflects a model of transparent, community-first engagement that could inform siting policy nationwide. Northwest Colorado is not waiting passively. It is proactively defining the terms, expectations, and structure required to participate responsibly. If sustained and supported, this approach offers a blueprint for how rural regions can engage federal opportunity with clarity, purpose, and mutual accountability.

Introduction

The spark that started the Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative (NCEI) came from a question that emerged during outreach: *What comes after coal – and how do we ensure our communities help define the answer?*

With three coal mines and two coal-fired power plants slated to close by 2028 across Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt Counties, Northwest Colorado faces the compounding threats of high-wage job loss, declining property tax revenues, and population outmigration. The urgency of this transition has elevated the importance of identifying sustainable, economically viable energy alternatives that can support both local livelihoods and long-term regional resilience.

NCEI was formally established under AGNC to lead this kind of community-driven transition strategy. The initiative brings together counties, municipalities, economic development professionals, and private sector partners under a shared mission to foster resilience through informed decision-making. Its advisory board includes regional leaders such as former Colorado State House Majority Leader and Colorado Mesa University President Emeritus Tim Foster, former State Senator Bob Rankin, Mesa County Commissioner Cody Davis, Garfield County Commissioner Mike Samson, Rio Blanco County Commissioner Doug Overton, former Moffat County Commissioner Ray Beck, and AGNC Executive Director Tiffany Dickenson. Matt Solomon, a former Eagle Town Council Member, serves as Project Manager, with Wade Haerle leading field coordination.

AGNC serves as the Council of Governments for Garfield, Mesa, Moffat, and Rio Blanco Counties, and as the federally designated Economic Development District (EDD) for the broader region, including Routt County. AGNC has long helped rural communities navigate the volatility of energy-dependent economies. As Colorado accelerates its energy transition, AGNC remains focused on ensuring that rural Colorado leads this historic shift.

In 2024, with support from the U.S. Department of Energy, AGNC and NCEI conducted a statistically valid, region-wide public opinion survey under the Energywerx Capacity Building for Repurposing Energy Assets grant (Appendix E). The results were unambiguous: 88.58% of respondents supported nuclear energy as part of Colorado's energy future. The survey also revealed strong support for retaining local jobs, strengthening infrastructure, and finding durable solutions for energy reliability. Together, these responses set a clear directive from the community: explore every option – including nuclear energy.

Even at the state level, long-standing skepticism toward nuclear energy was beginning to shift. In 2023, the Colorado Democratic Party platform stated conditional support for nuclear energy, but only if a long-term solution for waste storage could be identified. By 2024, that language had softened. The revised platform encouraged "continued dialogue, responsible research, and exploration" into nuclear energy and called for "safe and efficient transportation and disposal of nuclear waste and byproducts," provided it is governed by strict regulation and robust public input (Appendix F). This evolution signaled growing statewide openness and mirrored the

tone of grassroots conversations already underway in Northwest Colorado, where fact-based, transparent engagement was guiding the region's broader energy transition dialogue.

From that momentum, this project was launched. Internally referred to as ECA-1, this first round of funding from the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) was awarded to support preliminary work sessions and public engagement around collaboration-based siting (CBS) for spent nuclear fuel. The intent was not to advance a siting decision or commit to any project, but to gauge regional interest, assess community understanding, and surface the types of questions and concerns that must be addressed if the conversation is to continue. NCEI's approach has remained firmly grounded in fact-based engagement, ensuring that Colorado's transition away from coal includes transparent, inclusive, and economically strategic alternatives.

During this first phase of CBS engagement, work sessions were held with elected officials and stakeholders, inviting open, transparent dialogue around spent nuclear fuel, exploring its risks, opportunities, infrastructure demands, and potential to support economic development.

These conversations gained even more relevance in January 2025, when Colorado House Bill 25-1040 was introduced to formally classify nuclear energy as "clean" under state statute. The bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, reflecting the regional momentum already in motion. Still, as the bill advanced, a series of KUNC/NPR editorials sought to cast CBS discussions in Northwest Colorado as more advanced, and more secretive, than they truly were. Those articles, later reprinted by The Colorado Sun, fueled confusion and required NCEI to devote significant time to correcting the record, fielding questions, and reestablishing trust (Appendix H).

Ironically, this moment of misrepresentation became an opportunity. Local leaders and residents leaned in. Dialogue deepened. In March, NCEI presented a "Life Cycle of Nuclear Energy" briefing to Club 20's Energy Policy Committee, which led to a formal policy addition: Club 20 expanded its "All of the Above" policy to also highlight support for all phases of the nuclear energy cycle, including fuel development, spent fuel management, and recycling/reprocessing.

Hundreds of hours and thousands of driving miles were invested in stakeholder outreach during this engagement process. Dozens of articles were published on the project – some accurate, others agenda-driven – highlighting a clear impact: nuclear energy is now a front-page conversation in Northwest Colorado. One county has even discussed updating its land use code to reflect interest in spent fuel storage. Others have proposed sites, asked technical questions, and expressed a desire for expanded public education.

These engagements, shaped by both opportunity and responsiveness, are detailed in the following methodology section.

Methodology

The initial outreach strategy followed a phased approach rooted in four core principles: Inform, Invite, Consult, and Coordinate. Building on two region-wide surveys completed under the 2024 Energywerx grant, the plan outlined a 12-month schedule of structured engagement focused on collaboration-based siting (CBS) for spent nuclear fuel.

However, as the project unfolded, practical realities and emerging opportunities reshaped that plan. During an Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) meeting in Washington, D.C., breakout sessions provided a ready-made framework for facilitating grounded, community-first conversations. Rather than develop new materials, NCEI adopted and regionalized 20 core prompts from those national work sessions, setting the foundation for direct community engagement in Northwest Colorado.

Between August 2024 and May 2025, structured sessions were conducted with elected officials and local leaders from Moffat, Rio Blanco, Mesa, and Montrose Counties; the cities and towns of Craig, Meeker, Rangely, Dinosaur (informal), and other stakeholders across the region. Most jurisdictions participated in a full two-part series, with the 20 guiding questions divided across two meetings. This structure allowed for deeper exploration, clarifying dialogue, and locally grounded discussion about CBS and its implications for energy transition, infrastructure, safety, and economic development.

Additional insight was gathered through follow-up emails, phone calls, and unsolicited community input. While the engagement strategy differed from the original design, the intent remained constant: to listen, to understand, and to identify the conditions under which CBS might or might not be viable for Northwest Colorado. The adapted approach emphasized trust and nuance over volume, prioritizing meaningful dialogue over broad but shallow outreach.

This report reflects that effort. Each of the 20 guiding questions is accompanied by a summary of key themes and a full listing of raw participant comments. What emerged is a methodology rooted in adaptability, transparency, and community voice. It demonstrates how responsive, relationship-based strategies can yield the kind of practical, honest insight needed to guide any future consideration of CBS.

To fully capture the full scope of those early engagements, this report is structured into five sections: Introduction, Methodology, Regional Engagement, Conclusion, and Appendices. These sections reflect what was discussed, how it was discussed, and why it matters. Each work session question is summarized with key themes, followed by the raw responses collected. These findings will help to form future feasibility work in Northwest Colorado and in any region exploring CBS through curiosity, transparency, and local leadership.

Regional Engagement: Findings and Raw Responses

The visualizations below offer a high-level thematic snapshot of the CBS work sessions. The first word cloud captures overarching themes and facilitator context, while the second draws exclusively from direct participant responses.

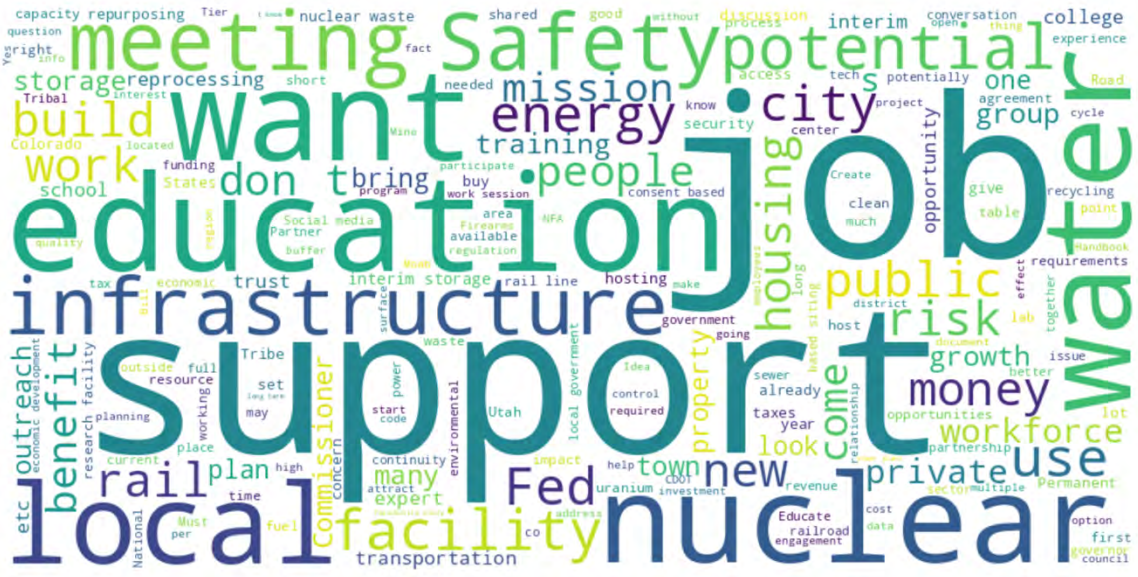


Figure 1: Word Cloud from combined Contextual Discussion and Framing Materials

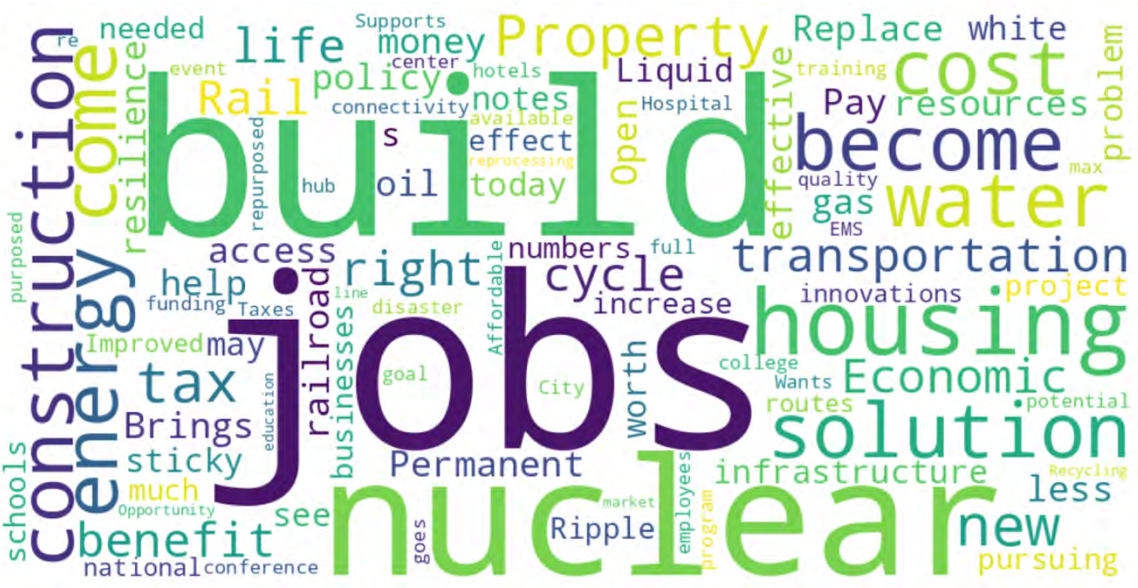


Figure 2: Word Cloud from Raw Community Responses to Work Session Questions

1. What would bring you/your Community to the table?

Participants prioritized practical site-planning questions above all else. Infrastructure requirements, such as housing, water, transportation, and broadband, topped the list, matched closely by land use and siting criteria such as buffer zones, public versus private ownership, and regulatory fit. Next came the need for clear, fact-based education and ongoing transparency to build trust. Tangible economic incentives, including jobs, tax base expansion, and clean-energy investment, followed, with robust community consent processes and engagement in the middle tier. Political and policy considerations ranked lower, reflecting a preference to tackle logistical questions before legislative ones. Finally, while support for broader nuclear integration (for example, small modular reactors) was least emphasized, it remained a noted long-term interest. As one county commissioner said, "You couldn't find a better community to embrace all things nuclear."

Raw Answers:

What are the infrastructure needs and wants? What is "waste"? Chernobyl? How radioactive is it, the site, the surrounding area? How much land do you need? Public or private lands? What's the safety buffer? (radiation containment?) What does "short-term" mean? How long are we talking? How is it transported? Train? Multiple sites needed or just one site? Where does it come from? (store on our own?) How does Utah (Energy Solutions) effect this conversation with us? What is "radioactive"? Any runoff into the water? ALL IN – this is a plan. Will the governor buy-in? State competition? We want to look down the rabbit hole. Determine if we are right location, right benefits. Need to make it fit into the upcoming re-write of Energy Plan. Ties into our nuclear energy discussions. Allows for up-front conversation. Tax base, jobs, community feedback, and education. Community engagement. Never heard a bad thing. Need a public presentation. A strategic approach. "Consent" by the community. Workforce, housing, economic development. Money/ jobs, clean energy pathways (nuclear), competition to be a forefront of tech advances. Wants: money, jobs, political ease, could be a talking point for future campaigns, consistency, resilience, generational jobs. Potentially enables nuclear energy acceptance. Repurposing potential. Conservative community, favorable climate, supportive. What jobs are associated? Already have naturally occurring material. No "NIMBY-ism" (not in my back yard) – mining community that "understands." Available private and federal lands, current DOD sites. 3 encapsulated tailing sites. "Couldn't find a better community to embrace all things nuclear." - Commissioner. West end is the "whole thing." 5 years to get mill going, 500 tons of uranium ore per day. Moab is closest rail access, would need an extension. Very favorable environment. What's the lifespan of the casks? Would this increase chances to get a SMR (small modular reactor)? Why *not* engage in community outreach – nothing lost to participate. What are the land requirements? How do they transfer fuel to rack? Not a risk to educate.

2. How could your Community potentially benefit from hosting a nuclear waste facility?

Participants identified a wide range of community benefits that could result from hosting a nuclear waste facility, with the most frequently cited being job creation – both in construction and permanent operations. Economic development, including increased property tax revenue and long-term fiscal stability, was also a consistent theme. Many leaders envisioned the project as a catalyst for broader regional revitalization, pointing to improved transportation infrastructure (especially rail), new housing opportunities, and increased funding for hospitals, schools, and workforce training programs. Several comments emphasized the ripple effect of investment, projecting benefits for event facilities, emergency services, and quality of life. Notably, some communities expressed interest in supporting the full nuclear life cycle, including reprocessing and innovation, and saw CBS as a potential gateway to more advanced energy solutions.

Raw Answers:

Brings money into the county. Permanent jobs/ construction. Pay for railroad access (build and it will come). Replace oil and gas resources in communities. Open up nuclear policy – resilience. Could it help nuclear become more cost effective (cost less)? (+) nuclear energy! Build infrastructure – again, build and they will come? Liquid white out and sticky notes were solutions to a problem…. We may not see a solution today, but it's worth pursuing. Jobs, housing, economics – what are project numbers? How much water is needed? (who needs to have the water rights?) Property tax increase. Ripple effect: new businesses, construction, schools. Property tax, jobs. Improved transportation routes. Rail innovations – national connectivity. Hospital and college EMS program funding. Housing potential. City becomes "disaster training hub." Supports goal for event/ conference center and need to build new hotels. See answer to question #1. Affordable housing and quality of life for employees. What jobs are available? "Wants full life-cycle" – max benefit. Taxes. It will be re-purposed – it could be repurposed right here! What goes into reprocessing? All of the above for energy cycle. Economic Benefit. Jobs. Opportunity for education. Transportation. Rail line. Recycling market.

3. What do local governments, States, and Tribal governments need/want when considering whether to host a nuclear waste facility? Are there shared priorities?

Local leaders agreed that clear safety protocols and robust community buy-in are non-negotiable prerequisites for hosting a spent fuel facility. They called for upfront feasibility studies to assess housing, sewer, broadband, and rail extension capacity, and insisted on transparent, locally tailored education: printed flyers, town halls, and FAQ documents, rather than one-size-fits-all digital campaigns. Economic considerations such as municipal revenue sharing, compensation for neighboring landowners, and joint city-county partnership agreements ranked alongside opportunities to clean up federal lands and repurpose existing uranium tailings sites. It was that stressed early, respectful engagement and mechanisms to ensure consent and concerns are built into any agreement. Across jurisdictions, participants demanded honesty about what "interim" storage entails, clearly defined buffer zones, and collaborative governance structures that distribute both benefits and decision-making authority.

Raw Answers:

Safety, community buy-in, economics – revenue, growth, municipal buy-in. QR codes & technology don't work – old school does. Flyer with details and info. Infrastructure needs: housing, sewer plans, broadband, etc. Train tracks (no rail), no freeway. Need a feasibility study – is it feasible? Need details and understanding to be incorporated into Energy Plan. Want more understanding of repurposing potential. Benefits the fed having a place to use – lots of federal land in the county. Should be located separate from the power plant. DOE own federal land with uranium tailing piles; opportunity to clean up tailings and repurposed the land. Gets the rail connector closer to Utah. Compensation to/for neighbors? City/ County shared priorities – should be partners. FAQ/ education (not singularly and repeated – molded to situation and community). Need education. Tell constituents: bring revenue. Tribal communities need to b e engaged, heard, and understood. Need to sell for constituent support – get ahead of the fear of vocal minority. Pave a clear path of jobs & money. How does a "parking lot" generate so much money and jobs?? Need to define "interim" – one type to another, intermediary, time/place/purpose. Don't blow smoke – HONESTY. Infrastructure. Casino in Montezuma. Housing, railroad extension. Water rights? Reservoir incorporated? West end – working on water and transportation. Highway 141 already designated for hazardous trucks. Extend paving across the plateau (Hwy 25). Is Hwy 90 to Moab a designated hazmat route? Infrastructure, training. All priorities could be shared. Growth cannot be supported without housing infrastructure. Would Feds "give" or utilize BLM land? How many permanent jobs?

4. What are the risks, if any, that start with introducing the potential for hosting a nuclear waste mission in your Community, Tribe or State? Who should start the discussion?

Participants identified a range of perceived risks tied to introducing a spent-fuel mission. Safety topped the list, with fears of leakage, containment failures and threats to aquifers prompting calls for clearly defined buffer zones and stringent emergency protocols. Political and perceptual risks were also prominent, as misinformation campaigns, anti-nuclear activism and media sensationalism could fuel community opposition unless proactively managed. Respondents urged early, trusted leadership of the outreach, preferably by a local, non-governmental liaison such as NCEI or AGNC, to spearhead transparent education campaigns and build partnerships with first responders. Several comments noted the importance of engaging state legislators and U.S. Senators to shore up political backing, while others warned of missed opportunities if the conversation is ignored. As one stakeholder summed up, the greater risk may lie in "letting fear fill the vacuum" rather than addressing concerns head-on.

Raw Answers:

DOE comes to public meeting (Meeker/ Rangely). BOOM (explosion)!?! Leakage. Safety and Security. What is necessary buffer from other facilities? Need an educational campaign. Does it need to be out of sight? Political fallout/ advocates. Listen to the squeaky wheel, include opposition stakeholders in process and planning – listen, invest in their time and inclusion. Anti-nuclear sentiment. Anti-waste sentiment. Outside activisms (how do you defend against outside environmentalists and money?). Public support. Misinformation will be crazy. How to get State legislature on board? How to get U.S. Senators on board? Need a point person. Natural Resource Director? Should be a non-governmental point-person, needs to be grassroots, AGNC/NCEI or other organization? Need a liaison with trust/power; someone that represents and that the Dems will listen to. Matt should be our POC (point of contact). Water table – how to insulate aquafer in case of leakage? [Protect Navajo Aquafer!] Transparency from Feds, state. Immediate target on community. NGO misinformation. What is opportunity cost? Potential other opportunities missed? Starts: Local/ trusted. Zero technological or environmental risks and no safety or security risks – needs to be communicated openly. Put solar on the interim storage campus – make it multi-purposed. Politics (feelings). Outside groups. Ski areas will argue against. If over the plateau, absolve the liability and argument – less argument than in Craig or Steamboat. Winter weather – only 9300-feet – need more support (low barrier). Potential monument designation could negatively impact the discussions. Safety / Environment: need community education. How far outside town do they need? What is the exclusionary zone? Safety and Environment. Need community education. Isolated Fire/EMS? How far from "civilization" do they need? What is the exclusionary zone? Political. Misinformation. Protests. How much does outside noise influence DOE? What are the risks if we don't participate? Visit other sites.

5. In a legally enforceable consent-based siting agreement including economic benefit packages, who is empowered – and can be supported – to sign on behalf of the host State, Tribal government and local government? Who can veto it?

When considering who can legally sign and who can veto a collaboration-based siting agreement, participants made clear that authority must rest with multiple levels of government working together. They pointed out that state mineral regulators and county planning and zoning commissions would share jurisdiction over surface and subsurface land use. Economic benefit packages would be negotiated jointly by governors and county commissioners rather than a single signatory. Many suggested formalizing these roles through intergovernmental agreements, joint memorandums of understanding, and "good neighbor" accords with environmental groups. Tribal leaders would also require their own government councils to co-sign any host agreements, and some participants even raised the possibility of a local referendum as an additional check, though they noted that referenda would require robust, fact-based education to ensure an informed vote.

Raw Answers:

Bring expert that has a facility or experience with such. Minerals regulatory is state, this is surface, P&Z (planning & zoning) would enforce land use. Economic packages would be governor and commissioners working together. Not one signor, would be multiple authorities and MOUs. Joint MOU. Is a referendum possible or advisable? Only enforceable if governments come together. "Good neighbor agreements" with environmental groups. IGA (inter-governmental agreement), etc. Above/below surface arguments for jurisdiction. [Sibane/Stillwater mining company in MT]. What does support look like to the Fed? How do they (DOE) gauge community support? Commissioners. Fed employees or contractors.

6. What resources – i.e., expertise in economic development, financing, infrastructure, emergency management, legal and regulatory policies, transportation – does your Community need to ensure any potential consent-based siting process is an informed consent-based siting process? What topics should be prioritized for your Community?

Participants agreed that a credible collaboration-based siting process hinges on access to technical expertise and robust community outreach resources. They highlighted the need for comprehensive feasibility studies to assess housing capacity, water storage requirements, sewer and broadband expansion, and rail extension potential. Respondents called for dedicated funding for public engagement (town halls, informational brochures, FAQs, and expert panels) to explain spent fuel terminology, outline safety protocols, and connect CBS to tangible local economic benefits. Many emphasized partnerships with universities and technical colleges for on-the-job training programs, and the inclusion of emergency management agencies in regular safety drills and contingency planning. Finally, participants underscored the importance of clear legal and regulatory guidance, covering environmental protections, buffer zone definitions, and land-use policies, to ensure that communities can make informed decisions with a full understanding of risks, responsibilities, and long-term opportunities.

Raw Answers:

Water Storage: imperative (is this required?) if the towns grow…. Housing, feasibility. Housing, expanded law enforcement, expanded infrastructure (could be built out). Need a feasibility study. Money for outreach. All issues need to be highlighted. Feasibility study. Public meetings. Info brochure. FAQ document. Bring experts with experience to speak in identified and surrounding communities about experiences, workforce, safety and security. Safety: will kids glow? Wildlife mutations? Infrastructure needs for growth: sewer expansion, cellular, broadband, gas line (both could be brought up from Rangely). Wish list: community center (CU Denver), amphitheater/ rodeo grounds, brownsfield money to clean up, update sidewalks and drains. Town Hall meetings. Topics: money (actual figures), jobs (quality, what are they, what is the job security?). Steppingstone to recycling/ repurposing…. Put them together. Need to write a compelling story – this is not technical, make it something people can relate to – KISS (keep it super simple). Start with basics (Nuclear Now film, for example). Glossary – History – FAQ. 17 rare earth elements here! Tell about jobs and viability. Robust education platform. OJT. Emergency management will need relief and support. Infrastructure needs are on west end. Financing (full list). All are listed in the question. Economic Development. Safety. Guarantees (leak?). What does interim mean? What is storage cycle? How realistic is lab and recycling? Rail extension. How would nuclear on rail line effect passenger service? What is the county benefit? (income stream, replace lost property taxes, rec center, golf course). Good paying jobs. Revenue stream to county and city (without adding new taxes). Conduct regular safety trainings. Engagement with other communities.

7. What do local governments/States/Tribes considering hosting an interim storage facility want to be legally enforceable and included in any new legislation? What changes are needed to existing law? Can those changes be made?

Local government officials emphasized the need for clear, enforceable provisions in any new legislation governing interim spent fuel storage. They called for statutory language that explicitly addresses annexation authority, building and day care codes, and land use regulations, including distinctions between surface and subsurface jurisdiction. Many noted that existing frameworks treat storage under "power generation" rules, which may not adequately cover long-term waste management and urged amendments to ensure that storage falls under appropriate land use codes. Officials also flagged potential conflicts with state agencies such as Colorado Department of Health & Environment (CDPHE) and concerns about governor interference, and recommended safeguards against executive overreach. While they acknowledged that detailed legal analysis is required, participants agreed that creating local referenda options, formal intergovernmental agreements, and clear veto or amendment processes would provide the community with control and certainty necessary for informed consent and long-term accountability.

Raw Answers:

Annex out of Colorado. Daycare (state). Building codes (State?). [Land Use] LUR: If using public lands? LUC: use county, not within municipal limits. Probably regulated by State Carbon Management? There may be no required framework in place. State potentially only regulates below surface and counties above surface – need to investigate and determine if there is a window for local control. Lawyers will answer this. Re-writing regulations now – falls under "power generation." Storage treated differently under land use code. Potential risk for governor interference. Manipulation for support – rail transit, hinderance. Would CDPHE interfere? What is leakage risk?

8. Under what circumstances should a Community, Tribal Nation, or State be able to optout?

Participants emphasized that any community should be able to opt out of a spent fuel siting process if safety cannot be guaranteed, if clear economic or generational benefits do not materialize, or if local authority is undermined by federal overreach. Concerns included loss of control, inadequate cleanup commitments, and long-term environmental risks such as water contamination or wildfire vulnerability. The ability to withdraw was seen as essential to maintaining local leverage and ensuring trust, particularly if conditions change or promised safeguards are not met.

Raw Answers:

Concern about “losing control” with Feds: too onerous. Locals maintain viable seat at the table. What is monetary return on investment? Safety: blow up or leak. Clean-up requirements, if reclamation becomes an issue or if new people come into play. No mothballs. Any safety failures: DOE resolves and remediates, wildfire mitigation/debris. Water quality. What is the benefit now and for future generations?

9. Would co-location and multiple DOE missions increase support in your Community, State, Tribe, and Congressional delegation in the consideration of hosting a nuclear waste facility?

Participants expressed conditional support for co-locating additional Department of Energy (DOE) missions alongside a spent fuel facility, noting that broader purpose and added value could help build local and political buy-in. Suggestions included pairing storage with a nuclear power plant, advanced research facilities, or a lab affiliated with Colorado Mesa University to attract investment and create educational and workforce development opportunities. However, skepticism about federal promises remained high, and multiple respondents stressed the need for clear, tangible benefits before committing. Participants noted that community support would depend on transparent communication about the full suite of offerings and emphasized the importance of integrating economic opportunities, infrastructure improvements, and potential timelines for related technologies such as small modular reactors (SMRs).

Raw Answers:

Don't trust the Feds. Secondary (nuclear) facility before waste. *Tell me what you're going to give me to take. Yes: would be easier. but would still be pushback. A lab would be good. Research facility with a college (Colorado Mesa University, etc.) partnership. More opportunities. More attractive. No waste without a nuclear facility; want a powerplant. Educate on "other opportunities" for reuse of spent fuel. Travel is biggest issue. Front Range would argue against. Clean Coal technology – 1 billion tons in Colorado. Nuclear power. Labs/research facility. Infrastructure improvements. What other support industries might this attract? Cut timelines for SMR?

10. What other federal missions would you be interested in hosting?

Participants expressed interest in hosting a variety of federal missions that align with energy, research, and economic development priorities. Common themes included establishing a national laboratory, a DOE-affiliated research or energy-sector headquarters, or a facility focused on repurposing and reprocessing nuclear materials. Several also proposed data centers, uranium processing facilities, or microgrid and grid security operations. Respondents emphasized the importance of workforce development and educational partnerships, particularly with local school districts and colleges such as Colorado Mesa University, to maximize long-term value. Other suggestions, such as relocating the BLM Headquarters, developing coal-to-carbon-fiber technology, and building community amenities like sports complexes, reflected a broader desire for investments that offer both immediate employment and lasting regional benefit.

Raw Answers:

It would be nice to know what they would consider. Road improvements paid for? What is the work force? What is the impact on the community? Is there a potential health impact? Data Centers. National lab or research facility. Energy sector headquarters (DOE?). Repurposing/reprocessing plant. Energy centric. datacenter use. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Uranium processing (Chaney Repository). Gateway/ Atomic reserves? Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Headquarters. BLM Headquarters. What are the opportunities? New jobs and industry. Repurposing/ reprocessing. Reactor. Grid security (micro grid). National lab / education. Research. Reprocessing. Sports complex/aquatics center. Tie DOE into college for programming, school district as well. Coal quality for carbon fiber development. Anything that brings (good paying) jobs.

11. What partnerships are needed to build a "shared vision?" Do any already exist?

Participants emphasized that building a "shared vision" for hosting a nuclear-related mission would require a wide array of cross-sector partnerships. At the federal level, agencies such as the Department of Energy (DOE), Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Department of the Interior (DOI), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) were all mentioned as potential or necessary collaborators. At the state level, the Governor's Office, Colorado Department of Revenue (CDOT), CDPHE, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) were repeatedly cited, particularly around infrastructure, land use, and environmental stewardship. Local and regional cooperation (including counties, municipalities, emergency management, and fire/EMS departments) was described as foundational, along with existing intergovernmental agreements (IGAs). Participants also saw a clear role for private sector partners such as Tri-State, TerraPower, and utility companies like Xcel and Trapper, as well as research institutions like Idaho National Laboratory (INL) and National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). Chambers of commerce, environmental organizations, and local media were considered important for outreach and public trust. One respondent acknowledged the challenge ahead: "We don't know who or what we don't know," highlighting the need for expanded stakeholder mapping and intentional coalition-building.

Raw Answers:

Federal aviation. FAA/FEMA grants. Forest Service and County – roads – better follow through than BLM – due to local leadership. agreements are spelled out clearly. County/ Municipal IGA (intra-government agreement). State. CDOT (Colorado Department of Transportation). Tribes. Private Partner(s). Chambers of commerce. Zoning and Land Use. Adjacent counties. CDOT – lots of road improvements need to be made in the region. CPW (Colorado Parks and Wildlife). City. County. CDOT. Private Industry. EPA. OSHA. MSHA. Water. Governor's Office. BLM. DOI. CPW. CDPHE. Emergency Management Team. Fire/EMS. County. State. CDOT. BLM. CDPHE. Environmental groups. Newspaper. OSHA. Private investment (Terra Power, Bill Gates, etc). Tri-State. Trapper. Excel. INL. NREL. DOE. NRC. We don't know who/what we don't know. Who is working to embrace it?

12. How can local governments. States and Tribes work together to identify existing resources and build support to attract other DOE missions? How can we coordinate with DOE?

Participants emphasized the importance of clear expectations and accountability in building partnerships with DOE. They suggested establishing well-defined scopes of work (SOW) upfront, including contingency plans if partnerships dissolve. Local leaders pointed to the need for baseline property value assessments to understand economic impacts. The region's existing networks, such as AGNC and its role as a Council of Governments and Economic Development District, were identified as foundational resources. Cross-jurisdictional partnerships, including coordination with Moab/ Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) and regional rail infrastructure near Cisco, were seen as promising pathways to attract and support future DOE missions.

Raw Answers:

Plan for divorce (spell out SOW). Identify property values before/after – is there a shortfall? Utilize COG and Economic Development District network (AGNC). Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado. Partner with: Moab/Umtra. Railroad – Cisco/Moab.

13. Does your Community have the available workforce and infrastructure for a new DOE mission? Or have the education/training capacity for any new DOE missions?

Participants expressed optimism about the region's potential to support a new DOE mission, citing available assets like water rights, rail access, airport infrastructure, and nearby colleges. While core infrastructure systems such as water and sewer were reported to have existing capacity, communities acknowledged the need for strategic buildout to accommodate long-term growth. Both short- and long-term housing and lodging were flagged as areas requiring attention. Education and workforce development were viewed as priorities, with interest in creating specialized training programs, such as a power plant technician track, in partnership with local colleges. Several communities are preparing to update their comprehensive plans and welcomed collaboration to ensure alignment with potential DOE needs.

Raw Answers:

Yes! Housing – what are workforce needs? Water requirements – will growth impact? Would attract more partnerships and address need to grow. Assets: airport. railroad. colleges. water rights/access. Need to know number of workforce (long and short term). Lodging (long and short term). Water/sewer. Comprehensive plan scheduled to be updated, can work together. Water/sewer has capacity. Infrastructure needs to be built out. Unknown what the future holds. Need to build a training/ education facility. Idea: "Power plant training program." Tech school options with the college. City has capacity to grow another 6,000 people; with growth comes regulation (buffer for 2500 people). Need to support local developers. Need help planning the needs and the growth.

14. Does your DOE site/Community have available land for new missions and a nuclear waste storage or disposal facility?

Participants indicated that available land does exist for potential DOE missions, including spent nuclear fuel storage or disposal. They referenced a mix of publicly held and privately available sites, such as federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (which comprise 50–60% of local land holdings), business incubator property totaling over 40 acres, and designated national land unit reserves. These assets were presented as viable starting points for evaluating siting opportunities.

Raw Answers:

National land unit reserves. BIC (business incubator center) land is for sale, 40+ acres. BLM (50-60% public lands).

15. If your Community, State, or Tribe already hosts or is impacted by a DOE site, is DOE-HQ and the site interested in hosting/being adjacent to new DOE missions and/or a federal consolidated interim storage facility?

Participants confirmed that several localities in the region have historical or existing ties to DOE-related activities, such as projects at Maybell, Piceance Creek/Basin, and Falon Creek. These legacy sites, along with established positive relationships between DOE and certain communities (e.g., Firk), were seen as precedent for openness to future collaboration. While the data is brief, respondents generally indicated a willingness to consider co-location or adjacency to new DOE missions or a consolidated interim storage facility, building on these existing connections.

Raw Answers:

Yes. 40 years ago. DOE Falon Creek. Piceance Creek/Basin. Firk- good relationship with the town. Yes. Maybell.

16. How can we ensure the benefits of hosting federal missions are shared equitably by the host State, Local Governments, and Tribes?

Participants emphasized that for the benefits of hosting federal missions to be shared equitably, local governments must be prioritized in decision-making and revenue distribution. County and municipal entities were seen as the most directly impacted and thus should receive primary consideration, followed by federal and then state entities. There was strong concern that the state might interfere or claim tax revenue, undermining local control. To support equitable benefit sharing, respondents called for regulatory clarity, funding for local code updates, and a commitment from federal partners to engage directly with communities, build trust, and provide consistent support across changing administrations. Education and myth-busting were also noted as critical to fostering transparency and fairness.

Raw Answers:

Funding to re-write regulations. Better education. Historical context. Share the truth. Education. De-bunking myths. Feds need to come to us. Feds need to build trust. Feds need to understand us. Need stability between administrations. Tired of going to meetings where nothing happens. Commissioners. Local Control. Prioritize: county/city first. Federal second. State third. Fear that probably won't get local control, and state will take tax revenue. City: tap fees, development, taxes. Know the rules and follow them – keep the state from interfering.

17. How can potential hosts Communities get engaged with the private sector on potentially siting missions alongside a federal nuclear waste facility? What is DOE's role?

Participants emphasized that meaningful engagement with the private sector will require coordinated outreach through local organizations such as AGNC, Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP), Business Incubator Center (BIC), and local chambers. Workforce capacity, subject matter expertise, and regulatory alignment were identified as foundational prerequisites. Building trust with DOE was seen as a first step before private investment or partnerships could materialize, with several participants referencing the "speed of trust" as a governing principle. Respondents also called for DOE to play a facilitating role, offering early education, helping communities prepare expressions of interest, and supporting infrastructure development. Transportation capacity, community planning, and upskilling the local workforce were all identified as shared responsibilities for any future public-private collaboration.

Raw Answers:

Capacity – people. Commitment. subject matter expert (SME). AI/DOE connections. Coordinate with local organizations (AGNC. GJEP. BIC. Chamber). Interstate alignment. Sector opportunity – educate in and out with local community. De-regulate. Work toward privatizing opportunity. rather than public. competitive. First. build DOE trust/relationship. First, build DOE trust/ relationship. EOI/ Education before investment (Speed of trust). Regulatory speed and introductions. Upskill/reskill local workforce. Facilitate recycling partner. Economic development outreach. Help with required infrastructure: rail, road, communications, water, sewer, etc. Address transportation issues: highways cannot sustain, rail is question mark. Assistance with community planning for growth.

18. Can private-sector projects be located independently away from the federal interim storage facility or would they be co-located on a federal site? Is there a preference? Are there limitations?

Participants generally agreed that site selection for private-sector projects should be dictated by feasibility factors such as land availability, zoning, environmental conditions, and infrastructure access, not solely by proximity to a federal facility. Some preferred co-location for logistical reasons, especially near transportation corridors or within county jurisdiction where industrial zoning could streamline approval. Others emphasized the importance of maintaining physical buffers between facilities to avoid negative externalities. The former uranium site at Chaney was noted as a central, large-acreage opportunity. One participant referenced the Trapper Redevelopment Plan as a relevant framework.

Raw Answers:

Not a driver – look at the resources. Dictated by siting and feasibility study (wildlife. water. earth. etc). Need a buffer from other industries (negative externalities). Co-located with transportation corridors. Chaney. old uranium site: 15.000 acres. Central locale. Land use codes need to be looked at. “Industrial” zoning? Infrastructure would dictate locating. Easier to co-locate if in county. Reference Trapper Redevelopment Plan (Appendix).

19. Does your Community have the available private land to support a private-sector mission and a consolidated interim storage?

Participants noted that the region is dominated by federally managed lands, with limited contiguous private acreage available for private-sector missions or interim storage. While some areas lack sufficient private parcels, others such as Maybell and the Trapper Mine site were identified as potentially viable, especially due to proximity to rail lines and existing energy infrastructure. ColoWyo Mine was also mentioned as a significant landholding, though feasibility would depend on geological analysis and ownership willingness. Across the board, participants emphasized the need for geotechnical review and clarity on land control before advancing any siting discussions.

Raw Answers:

Nobody will sell property to use for making money. Must got BLM (60% of region is BLM land). 75% federal land. Not enough private land in one area. Plenty of land in another area. Maybell is ideal. Trapper Mine may be a viable option – enough land, could potentially purchase, adjacent to power plant, rail line already present. ColoWyo Mine property is 100,000 acres. Geotech analysis needs to be done to check faults, Williams Fork Foundation.

20. What would you like to see for Community engagement?

Participants emphasized that successful community engagement must be locally led, transparent, and sustained over time. There was near-unanimous agreement that federal agencies should not be the public face of outreach. Instead, communities want trusted local or regional entities to coordinate the effort, supported by technical input from subject matter experts and clear communication from the Department of Energy.

Outreach should include both analog and digital formats, with layered repetition across channels. Preferred methods included USPS mailers, newspaper ads, flyers, newsletters, and radio, as well as social media posts, podcasts, and a dedicated website. Face-to-face engagement was viewed as essential: participants recommended small focus groups, local booths at community events, targeted door knocking, and roundtable discussions held throughout the region. While some supported town halls, others noted they are often ineffective unless designed for open discussion and staggered across different times of day to allow broader participation.

Participants emphasized that education must be grounded in facts, sourced transparently, and communicated in relatable, non-technical terms. Tools like FAQ documents, "myth buster" campaigns, film screenings, and to-scale models were seen as helpful. Many also suggested site tours, real or virtual, to provide concrete examples. Historical context and lessons learned from other host communities were viewed as critical to rebuilding trust, especially given past issues with uranium cleanup and lingering misinformation.

Several responses focused on the importance of showing all sides of the issue, including risks, benefits, and unknowns. Participants encouraged including multiple expert voices, real residents from nuclear host communities, and honest discussions about issues like emergency preparedness, fire risk, and disaster planning. The need for funding to support community-led outreach and education was repeated multiple times, with a call for annual training for first responders and stronger planning for potential growth.

Across the board, participants stressed that successful engagement depends on three key ingredients: showing up consistently, listening sincerely, and incorporating local feedback into decisions. One participant summed it up simply: "Every type of outreach: social media, surveys, small & large focus groups . . . Be factual, educational, and straightforward." Another noted that building trust starts with one question: "Does this work for the community?"

Raw Answers:

Outreach and advertising for meetings: Mailers / Newspaper ads / Flyers – Analog and Digital. Bring out DOE. 20 min presentation: history, current, potential. Q & A. Stops throughout the region Build a "myth buster" Education program. Not flashy – keep it real. List names and experts. Film. Experts panel. Address all sides. Local experts. Find a way to debunk myths. Past and present technologies. Larger period of time. More, smaller, targeted meetings. Set up a booth

at local events. Door knockers. Social media. USPS mailers. “To-scale” modeling. Money for implementation. NEVER have the feds lead outreach – must be locally driven. Robust public outreach is the only way to get trust. Stagger times day/night. Written comment periods. Working group(s). Social media. Website support. SME (subject matter expert) testimony – use online. as well. Early involvement. People need to know their feedback is heard. Full transparency. Historical context. Newsletter articles. More channels. “TCP” (transparent. consistent. predictable). Education with multiple views at the table. Show input from experts. Think about strategy. Ask: does this work for the community? Be positive and proactive. Mailers. Focus groups. Must have participation. Have a give-away (entice participation). Social media. Flyers. Public meetings. Find and attend scheduled meetings (other groups: library. farm bureau. etc) – go to their meetings! Local news segments on facts. Podcasts. Need to generate “need” and “want.” Tours. Public input/ education. Need DOE-provided materials and fact sheets. Source-citing for data is important: where do they get the data? Full time social media scrub. Educational tours at existing facility (can be virtual). Talk about both pros and cons. What are risks if we don’t express interest? Town Hall doesn’t work everywhere. How to engage with vocal negaters? Most meeting attendance in Craig may come from neighboring ski resort (Steamboat Springs) with pitchforks. Health aspects? Uranium clean-up took so long, rumor-mill took off with bad information. Education is huge. Honest current analysis of current facilities and issues. Fire/ safety concerns. Disaster planning/ funding. Annual disaster training for first responders. Every type of outreach: social media, surveys, small & large focus groups. Must include neighboring communities and the state. Educate on full (nuclear life) cycle. Educate what it really means. How does economy improve? DOE must be here, present, and engaged. Series of round tables and presentations. High number of smaller groups is better. Need people from current facility already storing material – problems or not, lessons learned? Real case studies. Nuclear plant and fuel experiences shared. Need nuclear community residents to be at meetings to speak to their experiences. Need a company to manage outreach. Have real conversation. Factual, educational, straight forward. Education: community passes, not the council (ballot measure?).

Extra Discussion

In addition to the structured questions posed during each work session, participants offered a wide range of unsolicited insights that added valuable depth to the conversations. These remarks, along with several follow-up emails, phone calls, and in-person meetings, reflected the complexity of local concerns and the genuine interest in exploring what a consent-based siting process could mean for the region.

One of the most frequently expressed concerns centered on the potential loss of local control. Several community members raised the issue of whether federal agencies would ultimately override local input, especially in matters related to land use, safety standards, and long-term project oversight. Some referenced past experiences with federal initiatives, citing unmet promises, shifting expectations, and unclear chains of accountability. With approximately 77 percent of the region comprised of public lands, many acknowledged that any feasible siting location would likely fall under federal jurisdiction. This led to questions about whether the federal government might be willing to transfer or lease land to local communities, and whether ongoing litigation, such as Utah's Supreme Court challenge on federal land transfers, could influence future options.

Reputation and perception were also strong undercurrents in the discussion. Many participants voiced concern that hosting a facility could stigmatize the region, branding it as a dumping ground rather than an energy innovation hub. Some believed this image could deter future development and community pride, unless a proactive communication strategy was implemented. Ideas such as co-locating research labs, advanced manufacturing, or other federal missions alongside a storage facility were floated as ways to shift the narrative toward opportunity and innovation.

On the logistical front, infrastructure readiness and community capacity were top of mind. Questions emerged about how much material would be transported each year, whether it would come by truck or rail, and what level of road and utility upgrades would be required. Participants pointed out that some towns can only support a few thousand residents, meaning even moderate population growth could strain housing, water, and sewer systems. Several recommended realistic modeling and visual aids to help local leaders and residents better understand the potential impacts and benefits.

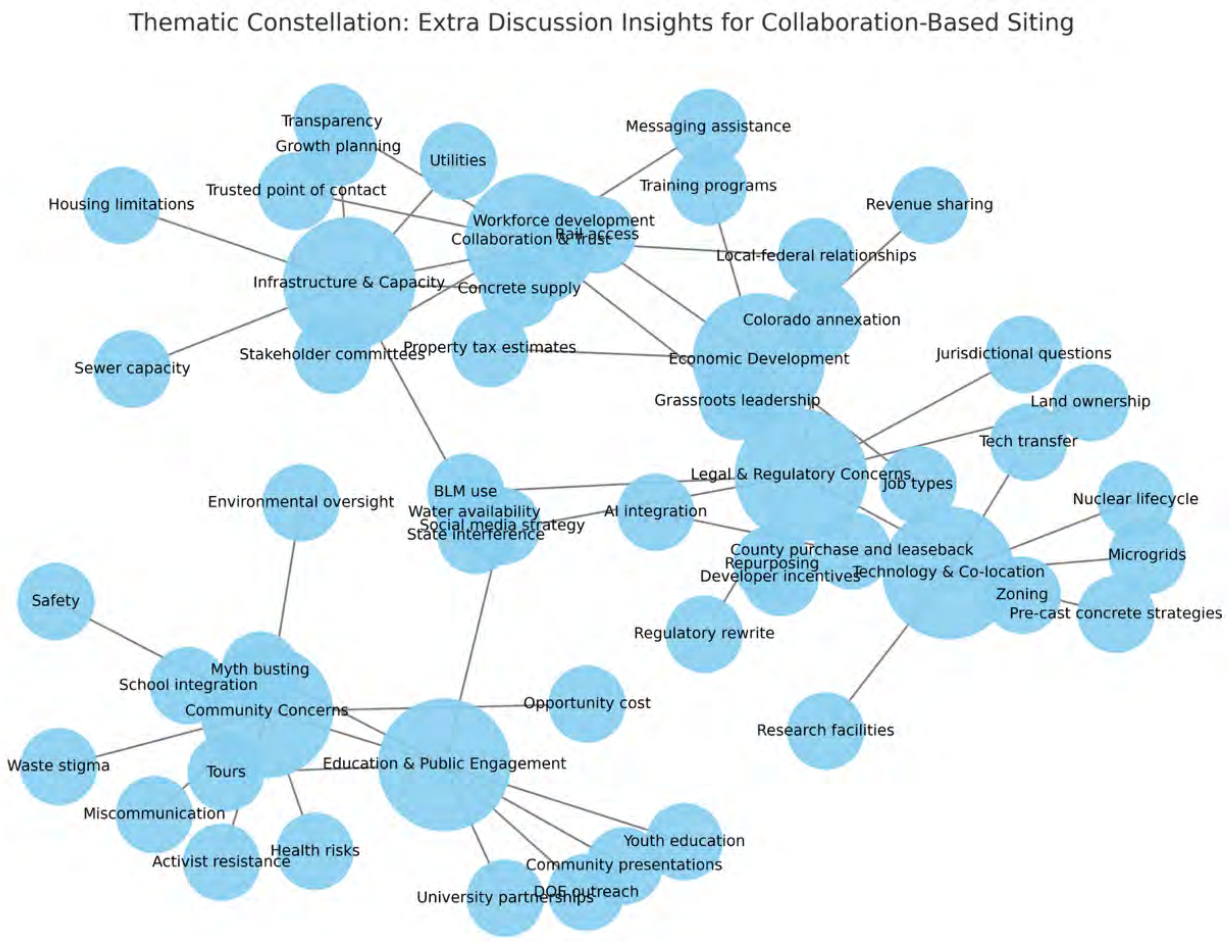
Education stood out as a recurring priority. Participants called for fact-based materials, clear explanations, and early public engagement. They emphasized that federal agencies should not lead this outreach, and that trusted local entities must be empowered to deliver the message. Some called for presentations, myth-busting tools, and expert panels to be presented in both large and small forums. There was also a call to embed educational content in schools, support STEM scholarships, and create partnerships with colleges to develop specialized training programs.

Economic development and workforce opportunities were closely linked in these conversations. Community members wanted clarity on short-term construction and long-term

operation job numbers, as well as training requirements, tax implications, and potential revenue streams. Several asked whether counties could purchase land and lease it to the federal government or private-sector partners, and what kind of public-private partnerships might be viable. The idea of aligning the collaboration-based siting effort with the broader coal transition, particularly in terms of jobs, tax base, and infrastructure reuse, was seen as both strategic and necessary.

Participants also noted the challenge of political continuity. With changing administrations and shifting priorities at every level of government, many asked how commitments could be honored across election cycles. Suggestions included creating formal stakeholder committees, engaging state and federal elected officials early, and building community support that outlasts any individual leader or administration. Some encouraged leveraging trusted local networks, such as AGNC and regional economic development districts, to help ensure continuity and local participation.

Finally, trust emerged as the foundational ingredient. Participants repeatedly said that building trust would take time, consistent engagement, and a clear demonstration that community concerns are being heard and addressed. They cautioned against flashy campaigns or top-down messaging, instead calling for honest dialogue, collaborative decision-making, and a willingness to address both the risks and opportunities head-on. As one person put it in a separate conversation, “We don’t know what we don’t know, but that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t ask. It means we need to keep asking and do it together.”



Raw Answers:

RISKS. Will local people be hired or workers imported? Don't want to be seen as a wasteland to dumping ground. What is France doing with repurposing? What is status of Senator Cruz bill? Suggested potential sites… Piceance Creek, ColoWyo mine site… set up an energy campus/ gas plant. How much would be delivered per month? Per year? How transported – truck or train? Owner needs to be a prominent voice and presence in the community. Does the lawsuit from the State of Utah before SCOTUS regarding Federal Land transfer to the states have an impact? The region is 77% public land, no feasible to place away from people unless on public lands. Will Feds/DOE give us the land to host a site? Trump has stated he would give land to Nevada for housing; Utah has a case with SCOTUS to give Western States land as intended, would either of these scenarios have an impact? Big monster: we don't know what we don't know. How does technology change or evolve? How do we not get "stuck." Check and balances: need triggers for stop or move. Need a very high-level team! Does out of mind equal out of sight? How to supervise and keep reigned in? Set communication, education, reporting requirements Set proper partnership with target county/ community Interstate support for rail. "Western States and Tribal

Nations" – who is included? How many employees? Housing is a concern to be addressed. Will need assistance with messaging as a team. Use old mine shafts for long-term storage. Community concerns: jobs, economy, environmental safety. Partner with environmental groups and energy. Bill Gates has a 10-year agreement with Africa for uranium, should be here. One town infrastructure can only handle 5K residents…. Only need 100-200 jobs; don't need and can't handle growth in the thousands. Need funding to re-write regulations. Link RR tracks for access. Need visual aids for understanding. How is this a revenue generator? What would property taxes look like? Able to negotiate more? Would or could the county buy the land to lease? What is work force training and qualification? Are there security risks? Any health risks during transportation? First responder training – Chiefs should be at forums. Growth cannot be supported without housing and infrastructure. Would feds "give" BLM land? How many permanent jobs? Align CBS to the coal Transition (jobs, taxes, workforce, etc).

Agreed to meetings to discuss Collaboration-Based Siting (CBS). Wants to know more, wants an introduction to DOE contacts. Skeptical of working with Feds, no trust. Interested. Agreed to work-sessions and pre-council meetings. Likes the work we are doings and wants regular updates. One city asked about the other city and county positions. City thinks the county should "own" this project but agreed to participate. Worried about a facility being too close to town. Supports joint meetings between county commissioners and city council members. Wants to expand conversation to more counties. Power plant city wants to participate – main concern is workforce and taxes. What are risks? Back-up plan? Safety? Suggestion to speak with Shell and Chevron – they own lots of land. Possibility for a BLM land swap? What is proper terminology? What is required? Is our county suitable? Education, Roads, etc. Use the college to facilitate community discussion – incorporate work sessions with all local city councils. Provide funding for participation. Get and stay ahead of advocate groups. Get university and U.S. Senators involved and tied in. Does Senator Cruz bill open doors for a college forum/ discussion? Likes idea of interim better than long term. Support workforce. No "bad" guys in our small town, supportive. We are a good location for this. Can DOE pull/ use BLM land? Surrounded by BLM. Being pro storage shows we are pro nuclear and will attract others to come. This sets up open door for: tech advancement, Tech horsepower (university and NREL), natural resource industries, drive for tech advancement, desirable place to live, lots of geological opportunity, we have competency and proximity (central point of U.S.), military presence. 25 years plus history of energy support in community. Potential to work collectively with other states like Wyoming (and Utah). Potential interest in long-term storage capacity, would need to work with neighboring county. Would work with short access to Utah. What are the jobs associated with interim storage site? What is the footprint? How many employees? How long to cool and transport? (What is the timeline of processing?) Use BLM land? What kind of training necessary for the workforce? Opportunity for the college to integrate? How many years of waste have accumulated? How many sites needed? How many casks per year? Need governor buy-in. Can they do this on BLM land? Railroad- hung up by enviros and state though Uinta basin…. Can DOE fast track railway access? Any of the process? Railway access helps with everything – economy, manufacturing, and other jobs. How

many jobs? How long is interim? What's the investment? Why interim – ship once?! Why politically expedient? Safety is huge. Perception. We want community outreach. Look at Wyoming for continuity of information without politics.

Extra Meetings

Maybell DOE land was visited and investigated as a potential site. It is viable and local contact wants to move it forward. Club 20: Resolution to support. MEDIA: Asked about media, reiterated that I aim to remain fact-based, data-driven; work sessions are preliminary with no specific project in mind; looking for Economic Development opportunities. Commissioners asked about timelines, continuity with elections, property size, pricing; wants info about research facility; suggestion: target messaging to middle and high school aged market. Industry meeting: different info than was communicated from DOE staff. Commissioner stated that most people seem supportive, "loud" minority, overgrowth concern, continuity concern (set up a stakeholder committee?), is it wanted at all or anything at all? Consultant: suggestion to run EOI as a campaign. Max capacity of one town is 5,000 to 7,000 people. Need to be mindful of that for each community. What does it look like? How many people? What are specific benefits to the community (not maybes)? Cost-benefit analysis (what are the negatives?). Continuity: Corps of engineers has a program that goes through the school district. Science fairs. Integrate SNF education into school programming. STEM scholarships. incentives for engagement (high school). Create a positive association. Create a committee. diversity of roles. Love the idea of a research/education lab. The income from this would support everyone's personal interest. How does NEPA apply to CBS? Look at White River conservation District and learn from them. SNF to aviation fuel? "Feed stock" for refinery to create sustainable fuel source? NEPA requires an open process. Where does repurposing come in if we were to store SNF? What are long-term effects? Cart before the horse? Storage before power and/or recycling. What is the difference between weapons waste and spent nuclear fuel? Water table: what protects it? Harmful byproducts? Armed forces / security for these areas? Federal tax incentives? Local news stations airing meetings. doing [fact-based] segments. Co-locate the research facility for larger regional buy-in (example: put research facility in Hayden for buy-in for county support). There are already rail line surveys on file from when David Moffat originally built the railroad to Craig, would be an efficient connection to Vernal. Worry about activists derailing conversations and sabotaging the rail line. Going to need rail, lots of concrete, and lots of water; could use rail to bring sand aggregate and water; set up mixing facility on site. Use pre-cast/tilt-up concrete to save time, money, water. May be easier to drop a rail line down from Wyoming to avoid politics in Colorado Front Range; however, with recent Supreme Court decision, that could be alleviated. Don't want to knock the beehive if there is no chance for a reality. If a light at the end of the tunnel, let's go! How do we maintain continuity?

Feedback via Email (after reading Craig Press article)

1. Since this project is about the Largest Nuclear Waste Site in the Nation, the Questions and Concerns of any Future Meetings should be shared beyond the Local paper to show transparency.

2. The Project itself is so Massive, an Outline of what it would take to make this happen from Start to Finish with details, should be sent to the Committees and Councils in advance. This would educate and clarify a lot of things that tie into this.

3. I mentioned in my previous email that I worked for Public Service Company of Colorado in the Construction Department. I worked at the Ft St Vrain Nuclear plant when it was operational and during the decommissioning. I observed 1st hand the problems of the Nuclear Waste. The Company made deals with other states and planned to ship it out of the state. Some of those States filed lawsuits to block the shipments. At the same time, some of the states between the sites filed lawsuits to block the waste from being shipped across their State. That's when it was decided to build a "Temporary" above ground storage facility. It's still there with the Waste in it. The Department I was in helped build it a long with the Security building. Lesson learned, "Nobody Wants This but How Do I Get Rid Of It"

4. I mentioned in my previous Email that the Committees and Councils should be aware of these Lawsuits including the Reasons the Nevada Site has been tied up in the courts and politically.

5. In reference to HB 1040, You and I both know this was passed during the Biden Administration and the Democratic State Legislature under Governor Polis. What the bill doesn't tell you is the Nuclear Energy is Clean, When it Works! It doesn't tell you it costs 5 times as much to build a Nuclear Plant compared to a Coal or Gas Plant. It's because the Nuclear Plants require Multiple Backup and Safety Systems to make it Safe. It takes much longer to get them on-line because of all the testing. Several times at Ft St Vrain, we were stopped in the middle of projects because complete design changes and Revisions. Finland just fired up a large reactor that took 18 years to complete. The smaller Reactors do not produce as much as the nation is led to believe. I just hope the NRC hasn't lowered their safety standards. This goes for the Shipping and Handling of the Waste.

6. You mentioned Maybell as a potential site and referenced the Uranium Mine that was closed down and became a Superfund Cleanup site. Why didn't you mention Okapi Resources that has been buying Property and Mineral rights to open a new mine and possibly a processing plant. If your going to give history lessons on uranium, a brief history of the Rifle and Durango plants that were shut down because they were dumping the tailings into the Colorado and Los Animas rivers.

7. You mentioned "that there is a potential for additional infrastructure beyond a spent fuel facility". This is very Generic and Scary. A Research and Technology Center for spent fuel? Sounds like a money pit like the ones Elon Musk has been exposing. Why aren't these Centers being built on some of the existing sites in partnership with the Utility Companies, since they're producing the spent fuel?

8. Your reference to the Size of this Storage Facility should be clarified. You gave the land size but not an estimate on what it will take to store the Nation's Present and Future Fuel. The guesstimate on the number of employees seems high.

9. And then there's the Buy the County Plan, You said think big, but Who decides What gets Approved and Denied. And at what point does the Governor and the State Legislature get involved? I sure they will vote themselves in for a piece of the pie.

10. Since the Committee expressed the need to educate the people as well as themselves, Why not an informative Web Site?

11. I don't know what Myths the City Manager was referring to? It either Works or it's shutdown, it's either Safe or it's a Disaster. They Only Myth (Lie) is that it's Cheap Energy that will lower the Utility Bills!

12. I'm not sure I care for the Generation Gap comment, I'm retired and have forgotten more than most. Millennials and the Younger Generations aren't taught in Classroom environments and don't have the desire to learn as much outside the classrooms. I'm speaking from experience since I helped design and taught a 4 year Apprenticeship Program for the Construction Department at Xcel Energy. Thanks.

Opportunities

Over the course of this project, several distinct opportunities have emerged. To follow are some ideas carried forward from earlier phases of discussion and others shaped by more recent engagement. Together, they reflect the potential for meaningful alignment between federal nuclear missions and community-driven strategy in Northwest Colorado. This section outlines those opportunities with an emphasis on practical application and policy relevance.

Community Reference Handbook

Raised in early discussions was the creation of a publicly accessible reference handbook to support education and transparency around collaboration-based siting. The model referenced was the *National Firearms Act (NFA) Handbook*, which the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) uses to provide regulatory clarity and procedural guidance. That handbook was originally developed by an external advisory group and later adopted for formal use by the ATF. A similar effort could be pursued for interim storage: if DOE does not release its own comprehensive document of standards and expectations, a credible external group, such as Energy Communities Alliance (ECA), could create a draft resource to serve as a common point of reference. A document like this could help demystify technical and legal frameworks and promote fact-based dialogue across jurisdictions.

Tiered Pathway for Community Participation

A second opportunity is the implementation of a tiered framework to guide host community participation. This idea grew out of discussions around fairness, flexibility, and recognition of differing levels of interest and capacity. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, a tiered model would allow communities to opt into the role they are best suited for: whether interim storage, reprocessing, permanent disposal, or a combination. An illustrative model might include:

- **Tier 1**: Communities willing to host all components of the nuclear life cycle (interim storage, permanent storage, and reprocessing).
- **Tier 2**: Communities able to host two of the three functions.
- **Tier 3**: Regional coalitions spanning multiple jurisdictions, with each partner hosting one or more components.
- **Tier 4**: Communities expressing interest in a single facility or function, contingent on local review.

This model could also support future policy alignment by providing a flexible template that balances local autonomy with national priorities.

Documenting Historical Relationships with DOE

Another actionable opportunity would be the formal documentation of past and present relationships between the Department of Energy and Colorado communities. Participants noted that institutional memory of prior DOE activities, such as those at Piceance Basin, Maybell, or legacy uranium sites, is often fragmented or anecdotal. A centralized record would help contextualize current conversations, identify lessons learned, and ensure continuity across local leadership transitions. It could also inform how community trust is earned and sustained over time.

Integrating Collaboration-Based Siting into the Energy Transition

As Colorado continues its transition away from coal-fired power, the prospect of collaboration-based siting should be viewed not as a standalone issue, but as part of the broader energy and economic development strategy. Participants consistently emphasized the importance of linking nuclear-related infrastructure planning to ongoing state and local energy efforts. Integrating these discussions with existing planning frameworks can help align regulatory priorities, strengthen regional strategies, and ensure that communities are not left navigating these questions in isolation.

Framing siting within the context of energy diversification may also open the door to new funding sources, innovative partnerships, and deeper public understanding. Aligning siting conversations with local economic development goals, workforce initiatives, and legislative milestones can create a more cohesive and proactive approach.

As community engagement evolves alongside energy diversification, regional readiness is already visible in local planning, workforce efforts, and infrastructure discussions. These conditions lay the groundwork for taking the next step.

Policy Reform and Legal Alignment

Several stakeholders noted that the current moment may offer a unique window to inform and influence federal law. Specifically, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA) could be revisited to clarify authority, modernize process timelines, and better define the role of host communities. While any changes would require congressional action, insights from collaboration-based siting efforts like this one could shape future amendments, particularly around enforceability, community rights, and the integration of local land use and infrastructure planning.

Early in this project, several stakeholders raised concerns that ski-resort communities along the rail corridors might oppose the transport of spent nuclear fuel. The then-pending Supreme Court case, *Eagle County v. Uinta Railroad*[1], was cited as an example of the extent to which those communities might go to prevent rail development tied to energy infrastructure.

[1] https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/24pdf/23-975_m648.pdf

The Court's May 2025 decision in that case significantly narrowed the scope of NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) reviews. The Court emphasized that "NEPA is a procedural cross-check, not a substantive roadblock," and that courts must give "substantial deference" to agency judgment about what to include in environmental analyses[2]. Justice Kavanaugh explained that requiring agencies to assess entirely independent projects would turn NEPA into an endless barrier to infrastructure, rather than the streamlined review process Congress intended.

This decision significantly narrowed the scope of NEPA reviews and is expected to reduce procedural delays for energy-related rail projects. For Northwest Colorado, where vast distances and rail infrastructure are critical factors, this ruling may improve the feasibility of future logistics while reinforcing the importance of local coordination and safety planning.

Together, these legal and policy shifts suggest that collaboration-based siting is not only a regional opportunity but also a timely vehicle for broader structural reform.

DOE NE-83 Expression of Interest

The Department of Energy's Office of Collaboration-Based Siting (NE-83) is anticipated to issue an Expression of Interest (EOI) in Fall 2025, with the potential for selected respondents to receive federal funding in 2026. While final details have not yet been released, this EOI represents an opportunity for communities to demonstrate interest in learning more about hosting consolidated storage facilities, discovering and determining if it fits in their economic and strategic vision. The core requirement of this effort will be a robust, locally led public engagement strategy, combined with technical studies and feasibility analysis.

For Northwest Colorado, the EOI presents an actionable opportunity to move from dialogue to demonstration, showing that community statements of interest are backed by the structure and commitment necessary to explore a full-spectrum energy future. The region's recent momentum, including bipartisan support for HB25-1040, the JOLT's (Joint Organizations Leading Transition) "All of the Above" messaging, and Club 20's updated "All of the Above" policy endorsing the full life cycle of nuclear energy, signals readiness for the next step. The EOI could serve as the vehicle to carry that readiness forward.

Given the size and diversity of Northwest Colorado, early-stage discussions have explored a regional application model in which three counties would submit individual applications, while sharing a coordinated third-party administrator. This structure would enable tailored engagement in each jurisdiction while maintaining alignment across the broader effort. In a rural region with limited capacity, this model offers a pragmatic approach to managing logistics, aligning messaging, and maximizing collective impact.

[2] https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-supreme-court-sides-with-utah-railway-challenged-by-environmentalists-2025-05-29/?utm

Preliminary estimates suggest that three to four coordinated applications could provide the funding required to fully support deep community engagement, as well as complementary technical studies. A single regional application would likely be under-resourced relative to the geographic and demographic complexity of the area. Alternatively, one or two standalone county applications could proceed with a smaller footprint but would not offer the reach or cohesion that a broader regional structure could provide.

With the anticipated EOI timeline drawing closer, communities in Northwest Colorado may soon face a decision: whether to submit proposals individually or as part of a coordinated, multi-jurisdictional effort. Either path will require preparation, stakeholder coordination, and clear communication amongst each other and with the DOE. The groundwork laid by this project positions the region well. With aligned leadership, timely planning, and a shared administrative partner, Northwest Colorado can present itself as a national model for collaboration-based siting.

Conclusion

The insights gathered in this report reflect the sincere, detailed, and forward-looking engagement of community members and local leaders across Northwest Colorado. Rather than passive recipients of external proposals, these stakeholders are actively considering what a potential spent fuel mission might mean for their region – not just in isolation, but as part of a broader energy and economic transition already underway. Their concerns are grounded, and their suggestions reflect lived experience with rural development, infrastructure planning, and past federal partnerships.

This dialogue did not produce consensus, nor was that its purpose. Instead, it revealed the layers of thought that rural communities bring to the table when given the space to ask their own questions and define their own priorities. From infrastructure needs and land use logistics to legal authority and workforce development, participants showed that they are prepared to lead, provided that federal and state partners are willing to follow through with honesty, resources, and respect for local control.

This is not simply about spent nuclear fuel storage. It is about understanding how collaboration-based siting might fit within a more complete and integrated energy life cycle: one that includes extraction, generation, storage, reuse, and innovation. As this report outlines, participants raised questions spanning safety, infrastructure, jurisdiction, and long-term regional benefit, underscoring the depth of thought communities bring when genuinely invited into the process. For some, interest lies in transportation infrastructure or research facilities; for others, the potential lies in building job pipelines, diversifying tax bases, and establishing more durable partnerships with DOE and its contractors. The message is clear: economic development must be real, measurable, and aligned with community goals.

As the national conversation on spent fuel moves forward, efforts like this can offer a template for authentic engagement. No promises have been made, and no commitments are implied; the questions raised here deserve answers. The transparency requested here calls for follow-through. The opportunities imagined here deserve to be evaluated in full, through honest assessment and community-driven interest and without politics or public relations.

The value of this report extends beyond any single community. Multiple conversations raised the possibility that their insights could help inform potential updates to federal law, including the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. While any legislative change would require congressional action, the perspectives gathered here offer a data-driven foundation for those discussions, particularly around enforceability, land use, and how host communities define participation, compensation, and oversight.

At a time when public trust in institutions remains fragile, this kind of transparent, local-first engagement can reestablish credibility and invite collaboration. Northwest Colorado is not just asking questions; it is modeling a more intentional, practical, and inclusive approach to complex energy decisions. Any federal partner serious about rebuilding trust in rural America

would do well to take notice. This work is a reminder that any credible path forward must begin with local knowledge, regional context, and authentic collaboration.

The process documented in this report is not just a local exercise, it is a signal of readiness. Communities in Northwest Colorado are not waiting for solutions to arrive from elsewhere. They are proactively identifying questions, offering ideas, and mapping out the infrastructure, governance, and partnerships that would be needed for any future mission to succeed. This level of clarity, curiosity, and constructive engagement is rare. It reflects a region that understands the stakes and is willing to do the work, provided it is treated as a partner, not a checkbox. With continued support, this collaborative model could serve as a blueprint not only for siting decisions, but for how rural regions across the country engage with federal opportunity in the decades ahead.

The responsibility now lies with both sides. If federal partners are sincere about collaboration-based siting, they must respond to the questions and conditions laid out in this report with clarity and respect. Likewise, if Northwest Colorado is to demonstrate that its interest is more than rhetorical, it must follow through: submitting strong, coordinated proposals under the anticipated Expression of Interest. In doing so, the region can show that its statements of readiness are matched by action, structure, and a shared commitment to lead.

Appendix A: 2024, October Consortia Update

Written by: Matt Solomon, NCEI Project Manager

October 14, 2024

After completing the second of our surveys this summer, we have utilized that data to open conversations with county and municipal elected officials and staff throughout the NW region of Colorado. We are planning three focus group meetings with each county and municipality. We are utilizing the Breakout Session questions from the DC ECA meetings in July to facilitate these discussions. During a presentation to the state legislature this past week to share the results of our surveys from the summer, I did not dive head first into CBS, as we need to be strategic in those discussions; however, I did plant the seed and mentioned that the majority party in our state has stated they will accept and support nuclear energy discussions - once there is a solution for waste. I informed them that we are actively seeking that solution so we can extend our discussions regarding a fuller "life cycle" of energy independence in our state. The best quote I can offer from one of our meetings thus far is from the Mayor Pro-Tem in one of the NW CO towns . . . as we were saying our hellos, he started the meeting with, "We are all-in, sign us up." I countered that we hadn't even begun the conversation, and he said it didn't matter. This shows a few things: 1- we have established an incredible level of trust, 2- our community leaders want to find solutions, and 3- at the local level, there is not a "fear" of the unknown. This is all very good and very motivating.

Appendix B: 2024 Q3, Report #1

Written by: Matt Solomon, NCEI Project Manager

October 30, 2024

In the summer of 2024, the Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative (NCEI), operating under the purview of the Associated Governments of Colorado (AGNC) completed the second of two surveys across the Northwest Colorado region. This data has since been utilized by AGNC to initiate comprehensive discussions with county and municipal elected officials and staff across the region. These discussions have led to the planning of a series of focus group meetings, with three sessions scheduled for each county and municipality, which are structured around breakout session questions that originated from the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) meetings held in Washington, DC, in July 2024. The purpose of these discussions is to facilitate in-depth exploration of the various facets, benefits, and challenges associated with CBS for spent nuclear fuel.

Additionally, the results of the summer survey have been used to begin conversations with the state legislature. While Consent Based Siting (CBS) was not the primary focus of these initial presentations, the groundwork was laid for future strategic discussions. The majority party in the state has expressed openness to supporting nuclear energy initiatives, provided that a credible solution for nuclear waste can be identified. This alignment between CBS and broader energy independence discussions is a timely development, offering an opportunity to advance both state and regional energy goals.

During early engagements with local officials, there have already been significant expressions of interest in CBS. A notable example came from the Mayor Pro-Tem of one Northwest Colorado town, who, during the initial greetings of a meeting, stated, “We are all-in, sign us up.” This statement of enthusiasm demonstrated several critical factors: first, that a high level of trust has been established between the project organizers and local leadership; second, that local officials are motivated to find practical solutions; and third, that there is no notable fear or hesitation at the local level regarding CBS. This positive reception from local leaders is a strong indicator of the potential for CBS discussions to move forward in a productive manner.

General Comments and Discussions (Pre-Meetings)

Preliminary discussions with county and municipal officials revealed both opportunities and concerns regarding CBS. Key themes emerged from these meetings, providing insight into how different communities are approaching the possibility of hosting a CBS facility.

One of the most important takeaways from these pre-meetings is the general willingness of local officials to entertain the dialogue around CBS. While some skepticism regarding federal oversight remains, most participants expressed openness to further engagement. They agreed to participate in additional work sessions to better understand the scope and implications of CBS.

Consistent communication and transparency were highlighted as essential to maintaining trust between all stakeholders as the process moves forward.

In one city, officials requested regular updates on CBS developments. They expressed appreciation for the work being done so far but stressed the need for continuous communication to ensure that they remain informed and engaged. This desire for ongoing updates underscores the importance of transparency throughout the CBS process, as it will help to build trust and maintain momentum in the discussions.

Another significant issue raised during the pre-meetings was the question of jurisdictional responsibility. In one meeting, a city expressed the view that the county should take the lead on CBS, though they agreed to participate in the process. This raised the need for clear definitions of roles and responsibilities between county and municipal governments to ensure that efforts are coordinated and collaboration is efficient. Establishing these clear lines of responsibility will be crucial as the CBS process progresses.

Concerns were also raised about the proximity of a potential CBS facility to residential areas. Officials emphasized safety concerns, particularly in terms of ensuring adequate safety buffers around any CBS facility. Questions were asking about the necessity for buffers and needed distance to protect residents from potential radiation exposure and to mitigate any potential negative impact on property values. Long-term community development and property growth were recurring themes in these discussions, as officials sought assurances that CBS would help, rather than harm their communities in these areas.

In addition to these local concerns, many officials expressed a desire to expand the CBS conversation regionally. They acknowledged that decisions made in one county could have far-reaching consequences for neighboring areas. As a result, they advocated for a broader, regional approach to CBS discussions. This recognition of the regional impact of CBS suggests that collaboration between counties could strengthen the initiative and help ensure its success.

The economic and workforce impacts of CBS were of particular interest to officials from power plant communities. These communities have been significantly affected by the decline of traditional industries, such as coal, oil, and gas, and viewed CBS as an opportunity to create stable, long-term employment. Job creation, workforce retention, and the potential for increased tax revenue were all cited as critical benefits that CBS and the greater nuclear energy ecosystem could bring to the region. Several officials requested detailed economic models to better understand the long-term benefits CBS might provide to their communities and to inform their decisions moving forward. The term “feasibility study” was cited regularly.

Safety was another central concern during these pre-meetings. Officials asked about contingency plans in the event of containment failure or other emergencies. Several participants suggested reaching out to major landholders in the region, such as Shell and Chevron, to explore the possibility of securing land for a CBS facility. Additionally, there was discussion of a potential land swap with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as part of the site selection process. These

conversations highlighted the importance of proactive planning and risk management to ensure the safety of local communities.

Officials also requested more clarification on the technical terminology and procedural requirements associated with CBS. Several participants felt that educational initiatives would be necessary to ensure that community members fully understand CBS and its implications. Local colleges were identified as potential partners in these educational efforts, as they could serve as hubs for community engagement and public education on CBS.

Political engagement was identified as another critical area of focus. Many participants emphasized the importance of involving universities and U.S. Senators early in the CBS process to help build political support for the initiative. Establishing a strong foundation of political backing at the state and federal levels was seen as crucial to the success of CBS. Additionally, it was suggested that Sen. Cruz's bill could serve as a legislative framework for CBS discussions, particularly for engaging the public through educational institutions. This approach would ensure that CBS is widely understood and that communities have ample opportunities for input.

Work Session #1: Key Questions and Detailed Community Responses

During the first work session, several key questions were raised that provided further clarity on the priorities, concerns, and expectations of local governments, tribal governments, and communities regarding CBS.

One of the primary questions was what would bring communities to the table to engage in CBS discussions. Many participants identified the need for infrastructure improvements as a critical factor. Housing, water rights, transportation infrastructure, and safety buffers were seen as essential components for supporting a CBS facility. There were concerns about whether the existing infrastructure in their communities would be sufficient, or if significant upgrades would be required. Ensuring that the infrastructure could accommodate CBS without placing an undue burden on local resources was a major priority for participants.

Another key concern was whether CBS facilities would be located on public or private land. The question of land ownership was seen as significant, as it would impact the long-term governance of the facility. Public land could potentially provide more regulatory oversight, while private land might lead to different governance challenges. Officials requested clarification on how land ownership would influence CBS's long-term management and accountability.

Safety concerns were paramount throughout the session. Many officials asked for detailed information on what kind of safety buffer would be required around a CBS facility to protect nearby communities from potential radiation. They sought clear assurances that safety would be the top priority, with rigorous safety protocols in place to ensure that communities would not be exposed to unnecessary risks.

Participants also raised questions about the distinction between short-term and long-term storage. They asked for clarification on what was meant by "short-term" storage and sought assurances that a short-term solution would not evolve into a permanent arrangement without further agreements and community involvement. Transparency and community input were emphasized as essential components of any CBS planning process, particularly if the nature or duration of the storage arrangement were to change.

The logistics of transporting spent nuclear fuel to a CBS facility were another major concern for participants. Officials asked whether spent fuel would be transported by train or truck, and how transportation safety would be managed. They wanted to ensure that the transportation of spent fuel would not pose a risk to communities along the transportation route and that all necessary safety precautions would be taken.

When asked about the potential benefits of hosting a CBS facility, many participants focused on the economic advantages. Job creation was seen as one of the most significant benefits, as CBS could create permanent jobs in construction, operations, and related sectors. Participants viewed these jobs as a critical opportunity to diversify their local economies and provide stable employment for residents.

In addition to job creation, officials highlighted the potential for CBS to drive broader infrastructure development. They discussed how CBS could attract investment in new railroads, housing, and schools, creating a ripple effect that would benefit the entire community. The opportunity to replace declining industries, such as oil and gas, with a new and sustainable source of economic growth was seen as a major advantage of CBS.

Water usage was another important topic of discussion. Participants raised concerns about how much water a CBS facility would require and who would be responsible for managing the necessary water rights. Ensuring that water resources would be used efficiently and sustainably was a priority for many communities, especially those in areas where water is already a scarce resource.

The work session also explored what local governments, states, and tribes would need when considering CBS. Safety protocols and community buy-in were identified as shared priorities. Officials emphasized that ensuring public safety through robust safety protocols would be critical to gaining community support. Educational initiatives that explain the risks and benefits of CBS were seen as key to securing community buy-in and addressing any concerns that might arise.

Infrastructure needs were also discussed as a major consideration for communities. Many participants emphasized that housing, broadband, and transportation infrastructure would need to be developed or expanded to support a CBS facility. Conducting a feasibility study to assess the infrastructure capabilities of each community was seen as an essential step before making any commitments to CBS.

Several risks were identified during the session, with safety being the primary concern. Participants expressed deep concern about the risks of leakage and containment failure at a CBS facility. They requested detailed information about the size of the necessary safety buffer zones, as well as the potential environmental impact of a CBS facility on the surrounding area, particularly in relation to water sources. Public education was seen as essential to addressing these concerns and ensuring that communities had a clear understanding of the risks and benefits of CBS.

Political fallout was another concern. Participants worried that CBS could lead to opposition from advocacy groups, which could have long-term political implications. Engaging with these groups early and ensuring that they were included in discussions was seen as a proactive approach to mitigating potential opposition.

Legal authority and governance were key themes during the discussion of who would be empowered to sign a legally enforceable CBS agreement. Participants sought clarity on the role of state, tribal, and local governments in entering into CBS agreements and wanted to know which government entities would have veto power. The involvement of experts with experience in CBS was suggested as a way to ensure that local governments had the necessary guidance to make informed decisions.

Participants identified several key resources that would be needed to ensure informed CBS decision-making. Water storage and housing infrastructure were seen as critical components for supporting a CBS facility. There were concerns about whether existing resources would be sufficient, particularly if CBS led to an increase in the local population. Expanded law enforcement and emergency services were also flagged as essential to supporting a CBS facility, particularly in the event of an emergency. Participants strongly supported conducting feasibility studies to assess the economic, environmental, and legal viability of CBS before making any commitments.

Several participants raised questions about legislative changes that would be needed to accommodate CBS. The issue of annexing land outside of state boundaries was discussed, as was the need to update land-use regulations and building codes to support a CBS facility. Participants also explored the question of local versus state control, emphasizing the need for local governments to retain authority over CBS operations, particularly in terms of safety and economic impact.

The sessions concluded with a discussion of under what circumstances communities, tribal nations, or states should be able to opt out of CBS. Many participants expressed concerns that federal control could become too onerous, limiting the ability of local governments to make decisions in the best interest of their communities. They emphasized the need for local governments to retain a viable seat at the table throughout the CBS process, particularly if safety protocols were insufficient or if the economic benefits of CBS did not outweigh the risks.

Opportunities

In addition to the structured work sessions discussions, several additional opportunities for exploration were identified during pre-meetings and discussions. A key area of interest was local hiring and workforce development. Participants expressed a desire to prioritize local residents for jobs at a CBS facility, ensuring that CBS contributes to local economic growth rather than bringing in outside workers. Ensuring that CBS projects benefit the local workforce was seen as a key factor in securing community support.

Extra Discussion

During the course of the pre-meetings and work sessions, additional points of discussion arose that warrant further exploration:

- → **Local Hiring and Workforce Concerns**: Participants questioned whether local residents would be prioritized for jobs at the CBS facility or if outside workers would be brought in. There was a desire to ensure that CBS projects contributed to local economic development rather than displacing local workers.
- → **International Comparisons**: Several participants suggested examining how other countries, particularly France, manage and repurpose spent nuclear fuel, noting that their systems might offer valuable insights into how CBS could be structured.
- → **Suggested Potential Sites**: Possible locations for a CBS facility were discussed, including former gas fields and coal mine sites. These sites were noted as having the potential to host an energy campus or gas plant that could be integrated with CBS.
- → **Safety Concerns and Community Engagement**: Many participants emphasized the importance of continuing to engage the community on issues related to safety. Ensuring that CBS did not create unnecessary risks to local residents was a priority, and participants suggested building robust safety campaigns that could alleviate public fears and opposition.

Expression of Interest Offered Plan

A structured outreach and engagement plan was proposed as a way to build public awareness and support for CBS:

- → **Outreach Methods**: Participants suggested using traditional outreach methods such as mailers, newspaper ads, and flyers, along with digital strategies to engage the public. The DOE was encouraged to deliver a 20-minute presentation at multiple community stops, including Craig, Dinosaur, Meeker, Rangely, DeBeque, and Grand Junction, with a focus on CBS history, current status, and future potential. This would be followed by Q&A sessions to ensure public input and transparency.
- → **Funding for Public Participation**: Participants recommended providing funding for community engagement initiatives to ensure that the public could participate

meaningfully in CBS discussions. This would include hosting town halls, distributing informational materials, and supporting local advocacy groups.

Tiered Selection Process

A tiered selection process was proposed to accommodate different levels of community interest in CBS while fostering competition and collaboration:

- → **Tier 1: All-Inclusive**: Communities interested in hosting all aspects of CBS, including permanent storage, interim storage, and reprocessing, would fall under this tier. These communities would benefit from comprehensive infrastructure investments and workforce development.
- → **Tier 2: Partial Interest**: Communities interested in two out of three CBS options—permanent storage, interim storage, or reprocessing—would fall under this category. These communities could choose a combination that best fits their regional needs and capabilities.
- → **Tier 3: Regional Partnership**: This tier would allow for multi-state agreements and regional partnerships to address CBS needs collaboratively. States could pool resources and share responsibilities, ensuring broader regional resilience.
- → **Tier 4: Single-Option Interest**: Communities interested in hosting only one aspect of CBS—either permanent storage, interim storage, or reprocessing—would be categorized under this tier. This option provides flexibility for communities with limited infrastructure or specific economic priorities.

Expanded Opportunity: Reference Document Proposal

If the Department of Energy (DOE) does not produce its own comprehensive standards for consent-based siting (CBS) in a timely manner, Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) could develop a reference document that serves as a critical resource for communities, states, and tribes considering CBS. This document would provide clear, legally sound guidance on procedural, legal, and safety requirements, ensuring that all stakeholders are informed before entering into CBS expressions of interest and potential future agreements.

A successful example of such an approach is the National Firearms Act (NFA) Handbook, published by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). Initially drafted by the National Firearms Act Trade & Collectors Association (NFATCA) in 2006, it is now updated collaboratively by the NFATCA and the NFA Branch of the ATF. The handbook serves as a comprehensive reference guide for the sale and possession of regulated firearms and has evolved into an indispensable resource for ensuring compliance with federal firearm regulations.

Such a resource would enhance transparency and foster informed decision-making, offering a standardized approach to CBS that could be utilized by the DOE, much like the NFA Handbook has been used in the firearms industry. Developing a reference guide for CBS would provide a critical roadmap for navigating the complexities of spent nuclear fuel and waste management, offering communities the tools they need to evaluate CBS opportunities fully.

Appendix C: 2024 Q4, Report #2

Written by: Matt Solomon, NCEI Project Manager

December 31, 2024

Northwest Colorado has entered a defining moment in its engagement with consent-based siting (CBS) for spent nuclear fuel, as regional leaders, communities, and stakeholders continue to refine their understanding of the opportunities and challenges presented by this initiative. Building on the foundational efforts of Q3, the Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative (NCEI), under the leadership of the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC), intensified its outreach and engagement activities during the final quarter of 2024. This phase focused on expanding discussions to include leaders and stakeholders who were previously unable to participate, ensuring that the regional approach remains inclusive and comprehensive.

Work Session #1, conducted during this period, marked a significant milestone in these efforts. It provided an opportunity for regional leaders to engage in in-depth discussions tailored to their communities' unique concerns and aspirations. The session also highlighted the critical importance of leveraging Northwest Colorado's industrial history, geographic advantages, and collaborative spirit to position the region as a national leader in CBS.

A recurring theme during this quarter was the strong alignment between CBS efforts and the region's broader goals of economic resilience, workforce development, and energy innovation. As one county commissioner aptly remarked, "You couldn't find a better community to embrace all things nuclear." This statement underscores the region's readiness to lead, driven by its supportive communities, skilled workforce, and commitment to advancing energy solutions.

Through these discussions, it became clear that the success of CBS will depend not only on technical and logistical considerations but also on robust community engagement, transparent communication, and regional collaboration. The following sections detail the outcomes of these discussions, including pre-meetings, Work Session #1, and the identification of key opportunities for the future.

General Comments and Discussions (Pre-Meetings)

The pre-meetings discussions during Q4 provided a platform for candid conversations with local leaders, allowing for the exploration of both optimism and concerns regarding CBS. A consistent sentiment among participants was the region's strategic suitability for CBS initiatives. Surrounded by vast stretches of BLM land and boasting a rich history of energy production, Northwest Colorado was frequently described as a "natural fit" for hosting CBS facilities.

Participants highlighted the potential for CBS to align with the region's existing strengths, including its geological stability, central location, and industrial infrastructure. Many saw CBS as an opportunity to not only address nuclear waste management but also attract technological

innovation and new investments. “Being pro-storage shows we are pro-nuclear,” one leader commented, emphasizing that embracing CBS could position the region as a hub for advanced energy technologies.

Key logistical questions were raised during these discussions, reflecting a keen interest in understanding the practical implications of CBS. Topics included the availability of rail access, the timeline for cooling and transporting spent nuclear fuel, and the workforce training required to support facility operations. Participants expressed a strong desire for detailed answers to these questions to inform their decision-making processes.

Another prominent theme was the potential for multi-state collaboration. Leaders recognized the value of working with neighboring states such as Wyoming and Utah to address shared challenges, such as rail connectivity and infrastructure development. This regional approach was seen as a way to maximize the economic and logistical benefits of CBS while fostering broader resilience and cooperation.

Work Session #1: Key Questions and Detailed Community Responses

Regional leaders who had not previously participated were brought into the ongoing dialogue about consent-based siting (CBS) for spent nuclear fuel. This session provided an essential platform for these leaders to voice their perspectives, share their priorities, and delve into the implications and opportunities that CBS could bring to their communities. The discussions revealed not only a strong interest in the economic and social benefits of CBS but also a deep awareness of the challenges and risks that must be addressed for successful implementation.

Participants emphasized the importance of tangible economic benefits as a critical factor for community engagement. Increased tax revenues, job creation, and the potential for broader economic revitalization were identified as key motivators for considering CBS. Generational stability, particularly in communities facing economic transitions, emerged as a recurring theme. Leaders acknowledged that the promise of long-term opportunities, such as workforce retention and infrastructure development, could significantly enhance public support for CBS. One county commissioner remarked, “We need to show people what this means in dollars and jobs—they need to see the generational opportunity.” This sentiment underscored the necessity of presenting CBS as not just a temporary solution but as a pathway to sustained economic growth.

Equally important to participants was the concept of informed consent. Leaders emphasized that community buy-in must be built on consistent and transparent communication. Community members, they argued, must feel that their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed throughout the process. This was echoed by one municipal leader who stated, “The people need to feel like they have a voice, and that their concerns are genuinely heard and addressed.” Participants called for strategic education and outreach efforts, recognizing that trust and understanding are fundamental to gaining public support.

Economic development was a central topic in the discussions, with participants exploring the broader benefits that a CBS facility could bring. Property tax revenues, improved transportation routes, and workforce development opportunities were among the key advantages identified. Leaders envisioned CBS acting as a catalyst for housing and transportation enhancements, which would benefit not only the hosting community but the region as a whole. Rail expansions, for instance, were seen as a way to enhance national connectivity and drive economic growth beyond the scope of CBS. One leader articulated a vision of their town becoming "a hub for disaster training," tying CBS infrastructure into broader community needs.

The integration of CBS with renewable energy initiatives and other clean energy technologies also featured prominently. Participants recognized the potential for CBS to support the development of a regional energy hub, leveraging the region's natural resources and industrial strengths. They discussed how CBS could align with ongoing energy transition efforts, driving innovation and positioning Northwest Colorado as a leader in clean energy solutions. "We're not just talking about storage," one leader noted, "we're talking about driving the entire energy cycle forward."

The discussions also highlighted the need for clear and enforceable agreements between local, state, and tribal governments. Participants emphasized that roles, responsibilities, and benefits must be well-defined to ensure fairness and accountability. Education emerged as a shared priority, with leaders advocating for tailored materials that address the unique concerns of each community. A one-size-fits-all approach, they argued, would not suffice. "Each community needs to feel that this process is molded to their needs," one participant stressed. Jurisdictional clarity was another critical issue, particularly concerning the use of federal lands and the balance of control among different levels of government.

Risks associated with CBS were not overlooked. Leaders expressed concerns about potential misinformation campaigns, anti-nuclear sentiment, and activism from outside groups. They recognized the importance of addressing these risks proactively, emphasizing the need for robust education campaigns and transparent communication. "The misinformation will be wild," one participant warned, "and we need to get ahead of it with facts and transparency." Safety concerns also featured prominently, with questions about protecting water tables, ensuring rigorous containment measures, and managing transportation risks. Participants called for comprehensive safety protocols and contingency plans to mitigate these risks and build public confidence.

Governance and decision-making processes were another focus of the discussion. Leaders agreed that no single entity should hold sole authority over CBS agreements. Instead, they envisioned collaborative frameworks, such as joint memorandums of understanding, to ensure that decisions reflect the interests of all stakeholders. While some participants supported the idea of referenda to strengthen public consent, others cautioned against the potential for misinformation to skew outcomes. "This has to be a shared responsibility," one participant noted, "or it won't have the legitimacy it needs."

Infrastructure needs were identified as a critical area for investment. Participants emphasized the importance of housing, broadband, and transportation infrastructure to support CBS facilities and the communities surrounding them. Workforce training was also a top priority, with leaders suggesting partnerships with local colleges to develop specialized programs. “This is an opportunity to build a pipeline of talent,” one participant said, “and ensure that the jobs created by CBS stay in the community.” Educational initiatives were seen as essential to addressing misconceptions about CBS and ensuring that community members fully understand its implications.

The discussions concluded with a focus on the need for exit strategies and safeguards. Leaders agreed that communities should have the right to opt out of CBS agreements if safety or economic commitments are not met. They emphasized the importance of clear, upfront agreements to minimize the likelihood of disputes. “We need to build trust from day one,” one participant said, “but we also need to have a plan if things go wrong.” This sentiment reflected a broader recognition of the complexities involved in CBS and the need for careful planning at every stage.

This session underscored the depth of thought and commitment that regional leaders bring to CBS discussions. By addressing economic opportunities, safety concerns, governance challenges, and infrastructure needs, the session laid a strong foundation for continued dialogue and collaboration. It also highlighted the unique strengths of Northwest Colorado, positioning the region as a potential leader in the national effort to develop sustainable solutions for spent nuclear fuel management.

Opportunities

The discussions during the final quarter of 2024 highlighted two significant opportunities to advance consent-based siting (CBS) initiatives in Northwest Colorado: fostering regional collaboration and developing a comprehensive myth-busting educational program. These opportunities, identified through pre-meetings and Work Session #1, offer pathways to address logistical, economic, and public trust challenges while aligning CBS efforts with broader regional and national goals. Each initiative underscores the importance of strategic partnerships, transparent communication, and innovative solutions to ensure the long-term success of CBS.

The opportunities for regional collaboration and the development of a myth-busting educational program represent pivotal pathways for advancing CBS initiatives in Northwest Colorado. Regional collaboration offers a chance to share resources, drive economic growth, and align CBS with broader energy transition goals, while the educational program addresses critical public trust and engagement challenges. Together, these initiatives lay the groundwork for a transparent, inclusive, and forward-thinking approach to CBS, positioning the region as a leader in nuclear waste management and sustainable energy solutions. By pursuing these opportunities, Northwest Colorado not only strengthens its own economic and environmental resilience but also sets a precedent for national and international best practices in CBS.

Regional Collaboration

The potential for regional collaboration emerged during CBS discussions, with participants emphasizing the advantages of multi-state agreements and partnerships. These collaborations would enable Northwest Colorado to share resources and responsibilities with neighboring states, such as Wyoming and Utah, creating a cohesive approach to addressing shared challenges in nuclear waste management. Leaders recognized the strategic value of leveraging the region's central location, extensive public lands, and history of energy production to establish a regional energy hub that integrates CBS into broader energy transition efforts.

One of the most compelling aspects of regional collaboration is its potential to fast-track infrastructure development, particularly rail access. Participants identified rail connectivity as essential for the safe and efficient transport of spent nuclear fuel, as well as a catalyst for economic growth and workforce development across the Rocky Mountain region. For example, improved rail infrastructure could facilitate the movement of goods and resources beyond CBS, bolstering manufacturing and other industries. By working collaboratively with neighboring states, Northwest Colorado could overcome logistical barriers while maximizing economic benefits.

Moreover, regional partnerships present an opportunity to align CBS with clean energy initiatives, workforce training programs, and technological advancements. Leaders envisioned a future where CBS not only addresses nuclear waste storage but also serves as a foundation for innovation in energy efficiency, carbon capture, and renewable energy technologies. This integrated approach would enhance the economic and environmental viability of CBS, positioning the region as a leader in sustainable energy solutions and fostering resilience in the face of shifting energy markets.

Myth-Busting Educational Program

A comprehensive myth-busting educational program was identified as a critical tool for addressing public misconceptions and building trust in CBS initiatives. Misinformation about nuclear energy and waste management remains a significant barrier to gaining community support. The proposed program would include tailored informational materials, expert-led panels, and community workshops designed to demystify CBS processes and emphasize their safety, economic benefits, and alignment with regional goals.

Key components of the program would address common concerns, such as the environmental and health risks associated with nuclear storage. For example, transparent discussions led by scientists, industry experts, and local leaders could dispel fears about radiation exposure and contamination. Participants also proposed using accessible tools, such as the "Nuclear Now" film, to introduce communities to the science and safety protocols behind nuclear waste management. Supplementing this with localized case studies and success stories would provide relatable and concrete examples of CBS's benefits.

The program would also include a glossary of technical terms, a detailed FAQ document, and historical context for nuclear waste management, ensuring that all stakeholders have access to

accurate and comprehensive information. Local colleges and universities were identified as potential partners in these efforts, serving as hubs for public education and engagement. Furthermore, the program would highlight how CBS aligns with broader community priorities, such as housing development, infrastructure improvements, and job creation, reframing the narrative to focus on opportunities rather than risks.

By proactively addressing misconceptions and providing a transparent, accessible education platform, the myth-busting program would foster informed consent and strengthen community trust in CBS. It would also create a model for other regions facing similar challenges, demonstrating the importance of aligning technical initiatives with public understanding and support.

Conclusion

The final quarter of 2024 marked a period of significant progress for Northwest Colorado's CBS efforts. Through targeted outreach, inclusive discussions, and a focus on regional collaboration, NCEI has continued to build a strong foundation for this critical initiative. The insights gained during this phase underscore the region's readiness to lead in CBS, while highlighting the importance of transparency, education, and innovative solutions.

Looking ahead, the priorities for 2025 will include implementing the opportunities identified in this report, from fostering regional partnerships to launching a comprehensive public education campaign. By aligning CBS initiatives with the region's broader goals of economic resilience and energy innovation, Northwest Colorado is poised to set a national standard for consent-based siting and energy transition.

Appendix D: 2025 Q1, Report #3

Written by: Matt Solomon, NCEI Project Manager

December 31, 2024

The first quarter of 2025 launched with an intensity few could have anticipated, setting a tone of both disruption and momentum for the region's ongoing efforts around consent-based siting (CBS) for spent nuclear fuel. While some of the turbulence was manufactured, the clarity and support that emerged from it have only strengthened Northwest Colorado's commitment to meaningful engagement and regional leadership.

The year began with the bipartisan introduction of Colorado House Bill 25-1040, which seeks to add nuclear energy to the state's definition of "clean energy" in statute. In a state striving for Net Zero emissions while simultaneously courting the rapidly expanding data center industry, the conversation around nuclear energy has become unavoidable. The limited opposition to HB25-1040 from traditional anti-nuclear organizations was notable, and though their arguments gained little ground within the legislative chambers, efforts were made to stir public concern through the media.

In late 2024, a reporter from KUNC/NPR contacted NCEI to inquire about the early-stage conversations around CBS in Northwest Colorado. What began as an invitation to learn quickly revealed itself to be a veiled attempt to generate controversy. Despite clear efforts by local leaders and stakeholders to be transparent and informative, the resulting series of editorials misrepresented the scope, intent, and nature of the discussions. These articles, later republished by The Colorado Sun, triggered a wave of misinformation that required swift and sustained response.

Hours were spent on the phone with news directors, clarifying inaccuracies, and providing factual context. The situation reached a point where the original reporter retracted aspects of his commentary in a live interview with NPR Utah. Behind the scenes, articles were edited multiple times, and while the broader press eventually went silent—particularly after HB25-1040 passed with overwhelming bipartisan support—the effects of the disinformation campaign lingered. Ironically, the heightened attention drove deeper engagement at the local level. With misinformation on the table, many community leaders and residents leaned in more intently, asking sharper questions and seeking to better understand what CBS could mean for their counties and towns.

The work continued. NCEI was invited to present at the Club 20 Energy Policy Committee meeting, where a presentation titled "The Life Cycle of Nuclear Energy" laid the groundwork for more robust policy discussions. Following the presentation, the committee voted to update its "All of the Above" policy to formally include support for the full nuclear energy cycle: the front end, the back end, and repurposing/reprocessing efforts. This marked a significant step forward in aligning regional voices behind an integrated, future-looking approach to energy development.

Throughout the quarter, NCEI facilitated a series of ongoing work sessions with county commissioners and town council members. These meetings were rooted in curiosity and a desire for clear, fact-based discussion. While one neighboring county continues to signal opposition to anything nuclear-related, the broader regional sentiment reflects an openness—if not eagerness—to participate in education, engagement, and long-term planning. Some counties have gone so far as to begin updating their land use codes to include potential spent fuel storage considerations, signaling serious commitment to understanding what hosting a component of the CBS process could entail.

In total, over 280 hours of work were invested in Q1 to facilitate work sessions, support legislation, engage with the public, and manage the fallout from misleading press coverage. The sheer volume of activity speaks not to chaos, but to momentum. I have begun to refer to 2025 as "a rocket ship of chaos"—but one that we're on for the ride, fully strapped in and eyes forward.

Twenty-four articles were written about NCEI's work this quarter—most accurate, some agenda-driven—but all reinforcing the fact that CBS and nuclear energy are no longer fringe conversations. They are front and center in Colorado's energy and economic development landscape. The questions raised during work sessions, the land use discussions underway, and the thoughtful site location suggestions offered by community leaders will be compiled and included with the final report in June.

As the quarter closes, it is clear that the region has moved from conceptual discussion to grounded dialogue. The questions are sharper, the engagement is stronger, and the commitment to inclusive, informed community participation remains the guiding principle. In short, the work continues—and the foundation grows stronger by the day.

Appendix E: Energywerx Survey 1 Conclusions

As Northwest Colorado considers options for replacing a coal-fired electricity generating power plants, this survey was launched to hear the views of stakeholders on one of the options, nuclear energy, as it compares to the other options being considered. The focus on nuclear in this survey came as a result of questions and comments from our 2023 outreach efforts.

The survey revealed opinions about nuclear energy in Northwest Colorado and the nation. In general, Northwest Colorado residents were more strongly favorable to nuclear energy than the general U.S. public and much more knowledgeable on the subject. The difference could be because Northwest Colorado respondents have heard more about the topic from ongoing discussions of options to replace the coal plant.

60.82% of Northwest Colorado respondents strongly favor the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity for the nation, while 58.78% strongly favor this for Northwest Colorado. When adding strongly favor and somewhat favor together, Northwest Colorado had 88.58% that favored nuclear energy in the U.S., with 76.8% of national respondents in favor. The combined strongly favor and somewhat favor for Northwest Colorado is 84.49%.

Northwest Colorado values reliable electricity, affordable electricity, energy security, and energy independence the most, and climate change and small footprint the least. There is distinct difference between how Northwest Colorado and the nation valued climate change.

In the knowledge section, Northwest Colorado residents scored above the U.S. public at large. After reading nuclear power facts, “strongly favor” increased from 58.78% to 66.12% in Northwest Colorado. Almost all of this increase was from the “somewhat favor” category, as “somewhat oppose” barely changed and “strongly oppose” did not change.

Northwest Colorado’s impression of the efficiency of each source of electricity rated nuclear the highest, followed by gas and coal. The Northwest Colorado scores were significantly lower than the nation for solar, wind, and hydrogen.

The focus of NCEI has been to facilitate fact-based discussions around the energy transition. This report took a community survey on energy perceptions and preferences and has illustrated the community’s knowledge and opinions on the topic.

Appendix F: Colorado Party Platforms

Democrat Party (Majority Party)

2023 Colorado Democrat Nuclear Platform:

Nuclear power is not green energy – it produces radioactive nuclear waste, to which there is no safe storage and disposal solution, and other externalized costs. No new nuclear power reactors until there is an actual solution to these problems.

2024 Colorado Democrat Nuclear Platform:

(Page 26, #16): We support the continued dialogue, responsible research and exploration around the development of nuclear power and fusion energy applications.

(#17): We support safe and efficient transportation and disposal of nuclear waste and byproducts. Until there is a proven solution for disposal, we cannot support any nuclear projects in our state without strict regulation and significant public input.

Republican Party (Minority Party)

Colorado Republicans do not have a single, detailed official document outlining all aspects of their "All of the Above" energy policy. However, their support for legislation like HB25-1040[3], SB25-120[4], and the statements and actions of their lawmakers demonstrate a clear stance favoring the use of nuclear energy in Colorado.

They advocate for nuclear energy as a clean, reliable, and potentially cost-effective power source, particularly in the context of transitioning away from fossil fuels and maintaining grid stability. Some key points regarding their policy and stance include:

- Classification of Nuclear Energy as Clean Energy
- Support for Bill HB25-1040 and SB25-120
- Filling the Energy Gap
- Economic Benefits
- Technological Advancements

[3] Colorado General Assembly. (2025). *Adding Nuclear Energy as a Clean Energy Resource* (HB25-1040). https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb25-1040.

[4] Colorado General Assembly. (2025). *Nuclear Workforce Development & Education Program* (SB25-120). https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb25-120.

Appendix G: Northwest Colorado Map

A transportation map of Northwest Colorado showing highways and rail roads.

Colorado Department of Transportation Online Transportation Information System (CDOT OTIS), CDOTArcGIS Online, accessed June 23, 2025, https://dtdapps.coloradodot.info/MapViewExt/

Appendix H: Media Links

The following is a compilation of media coverage related to this grant cycle. While not all articles directly addressed the ECA-1 project, and some coverage was incomplete or critical, this collection reflects how the broader effort became part of the statewide energy conversation. If any links are inactive, PDF copies can be provided upon request.

December 24, 2024, Steamboat Radio: https://www.steamboatradio.com/2024/12/23/northwest-colorado-news-for-tuesday-dec-24-2024/

January 3, 2025, Grand Junction Sentinel: https://www.gjsentinel.com/news/grant-aimed-at-building-energy-transition-collaboration/article_4eee80bc-c4a7-11ef-b358-57f4f395f3f8.html

January 14, 2025, KUNC/NPR News: https://www.kunc.org/news/2025-01-14/many-states-have-resisted-nuclear-waste-storage-plans-northwest-colorado-is-quietly-opening-the-door

January 14, 2025, The Business Times: https://thebusinesstimes.com/nw-colorado-receives-75000-grant/

January 17, 2025, Rocky Mountain Voice: https://rockymountainvoice.com/2025/01/17/associated-governments-of-northwest-colorado-leading-on-plan-for-colorado-energy-transition/

January 18, 2025, The Colorado Sun (re-print of KUNC): https://coloradosun.com/2025/01/18/nuclear-waste-storage-colorado-rio-blanco-county-rangely/

January 20, 2025, Big Pivots: https://bigpivots.com/something-different-a-nuclear-bill-with-bipartisan-sponsors/

January 21, 2025, Post Independent: https://www.postindependent.com/news/bipartisan-push-for-nuclear-energy/

January 21, 2025, Summit Daily: https://www.summitdaily.com/news/colorado-nuclear-energy-coal-transition/

January 21, 2025, KUNC/NPR News: https://www.kunc.org/news/2025-01-21/replacing-mining-jobs-with-a-nuclear-waste-facility-those-in-leadership-have-mixed-feelings

January 22, 2025, Yampa Valley Bugle: https://www.yampavalleybugle.com/post/routt-commissioners-skeptical-of-nuclear-in-northwest-colorado-feel-county-s-interests-being-misrep

January 23, 2025, Steamboat Pilot & Today: https://www.steamboatpilot.com/news/state-lawmakers-push-nuclear-energy-for-coal-communities/

February 4, 2025, KUER Utah: https://www.kuer.org/politics-government/2025-02-04/where-will-nuclear-waste-go-a-quiet-effort-is-underway-to-bring-it-to-rural-colorado

February 5, 2025, The Sopris Sun: https://soprissun.com/garco-report-no-nuke-waste-163000-for-new-vehicles-new-lobbyist-hired/

February 10, 2025, Colorado Politics: https://www.coloradopolitics.com/opinion/will-long-orphaned-nuclear-waste-storage-site-find-a-home-in-moffat-county-hudson/article_6b42ab02-e5dc-11ef-9634-73a7def8df06.html

February 12, 2025, Post Independent: https://www.postindependent.com/news/garfield-county-commissioners-support-classifying-nuclear-energy-as-clean/

February 15, 2025, KJCT8: https://www.kjct8.com/2025/02/15/bill-could-increase-energy-prospects-garfield-county-potentially-nuclear/

February 27, 2025, Rocky Mountain Voice: https://rockymountainvoice.com/2025/02/27/western-slope-officials-supporting-the-nuclear-option-for-energy/

March 1, 2025, Colorado Politics: https://www.coloradopolitics.com/news/coal-nuclear-fuel-colorado-energy/article_cc808283-6939-57dc-b43e-e9011bff1d90.html

March 2, 2025, Complete Colorado: https://completecolorado.com/2025/03/01/nuclear-clean-energy-source-clears-colorado-house/

March 2, 2025, Denver Gazette: https://denvergazette.com/news/coal-nuclear-fuel-colorado-energy/article_34852bbe-f06b-11ef-ae36-b72561e9251b.html

March 12, 2025, The Herald Times: https://www.theheraldtimes.com/meeker-trustees-discuss-nuclear-energy-community-updates/meeker/

March 19, 2025, The Herald Times: https://www.theheraldtimes.com/county-beat-commissioners-make-board-appointments-discuss-broadband-upgrades/rio-blanco-county/

March 28, 2025, Steamboat Pilot & Today: https://www.steamboatpilot.com/news/government/discussion-of-potential-spent-nuclear-fuel-storage-facility-comes-to-craig-city-council/

April 1, 2025, Energy Ruminations: https://douglascsandridge.substack.com/p/colorados-first-step-towards-energy?utm_source=post-email-title&publication_id=786792&post_id=160380757&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=true&r=454m92&triedRedirect=true&utm_medium=email

April 1, 2025, The Colorado Sun: https://coloradosun.com/2025/04/01/hb-1040-nuclear-energy-colorado-designation/

April 14, 2025, Craig Press: https://www.craigdailypress.com/news/city-of-craig-continues-dialogue-on-possible-spent-nuclear-fuel-storage-facility-near-maybell/

April 20, 2025, CBS News: https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/coal-dependent-communities-colorado-consider-nuclear-transition/

June 11, 2025, Colorado Times Recorder: https://coloradotimesrecorder.com/2025/06/climate-change-big-tech-has-northwest-colorado-eyeing-a-bipartisan-nuke-boom-waste-storage/70501/