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

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

By

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Key points

- Transportation systems can cause disproportionate social and economic impacts to certain, more vulnerable communities.

- Attention needs to be given to *how* things are done (process) as well as what happens (outcomes).

- Context matters.

Social and economic impacts

- Direct impacts vs. secondary impacts

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

Social and economic impacts

- Individual and group behaviors are influenced by judgments about risks and risk management systems -- *positively or negatively*.
- Direct impacts on a transportation system
    - E.g., increased costs, inadequate resources, "over-building" system, reduction in vigilance
- Secondary impacts from a transportation system
    - E.g., decrease in property values, stigma, infrastructure development, effects on national energy policy, lack of attention to other serious risks
- Impacts are *not* evenly distributed
    - Disproportionate impacts to vulnerable/marginalized groups.

Communication and participation

- Can risk communication and public participation:

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

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

Risk communication

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

- A range of possibilities…
  - "One way" to "two way"
  - From "giving information to" to "having a dialogue with"

Public participation

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

The basic idea:

Enable interested and affected parties to have voice and influence in research, planning, decision making, monitoring, or evaluation.

Key questions

- *Why* have communication and participation?
- *When* should there be communication and participation?
- *Who* should be part of a communication and participation effort?
- *How* should communication and participation efforts be designed?
- There can be disputes about all of these…

Context of the program can influence opportunities, needs, choices….

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

Why have communication and participation?

- Multiple, perhaps conflicting, purposes and goals possible.

- Purposes are often disputed.

- Unclear goals can cause confusion and raise expectations that will not be met.

- Important links between goals for information sharing (communication) and participation.

Purposes and goals of risk communication

- To persuade?
- To inform?
  - for personal action or social decision making?
- To improve understandings?
  - for personal action or social decision making?
- To create dialogue about choices?

Purposes and goals of public participation

- Instrumental
- Substantive
- Normative
- Agency policies and guidelines
    - DOE, OCRWM, DOT, NRC…

When should there be communication and participation?

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

Who should be part of a communication and participation effort?

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

How should communication and participation efforts be designed?

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

How should communication and participation efforts be designed?

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