



2002

# Belgium's radioactive waste management program

## Low-level radioactive waste

Belgium stores long- and short-lived radioactive wastes in specially designed facilities across the country. Belgium's National Agency for Radioactive Waste and Enriched Fissile Materials (ONDRAF/NIRAS), is looking at potential geologic storage sites for low-level and short-lived radioactive waste in more than 50 municipalities.

## Deep geologic disposal plans

After studying long-term waste management options, Belgium's government elected deep geologic disposal in 1998, deciding that deep clay and shale were the most appropriate formations for long-lived and high-level waste. A clay site for high-level vitrified (solidified) waste disposal is also being studied near Belgium's Doel nuclear power plant.

Belgium takes a multi-barrier approach to repository design. Storage casks will be made of steel over-laid with stainless steel. Current plans call for the repository to open between 2035 and 2080.

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## Spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste

Spent nuclear fuel is stored in reactor pools. High-level wastes are stored for 50 years at the country's central interim storage site at the Mol-Dessel nuclear power plant and research center north of Antwerp.

## Reprocessing spent nuclear fuel

Spent nuclear fuel from Belgium's reactors was sent to France until 1998, when the country decided to stop reprocessing. Vitrified (solidified) high-level wastes from spent nuclear fuel reprocessing are returned to Belgium, and will eventually be put into a deep geologic repository.

## Transporting radioactive waste

Belgium has over 20 years' experience with spent nuclear fuel transport, both domestically and abroad, by truck, rail, and ship.

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U.S. Department of Energy  
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management

## YUCCA MOUNTAIN SITE CHARACTERIZATION PROJECT

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