



SPECIAL TOPIC SEMINAR

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO OUR NUCLEAR WASTE DISPOSAL PROGRAM?

Dr. James Conca, Senior Scientist
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4:00 p.m. | October 15th | Zoom

[Conca Seminar Flyer](#) / Meeting ID: 947 8908 1382 / PW: nuclear / Phone: 877-853-5247

Dr. Conca will discuss the history and present state of America's nuclear waste disposal program and the underlying issues, including cost and policy, that are slowing the program to a crawl and preventing us from actually disposing of our nuclear waste. There are three successful paths open to us, but none of them are being pursued at present.

Unknown to most, America has an operating deep geologic nuclear waste repository in southeast New Mexico, called the WIPP, that is in the best geologic formation in the world for this purpose – the massive salt of the Permian age Salado Formation, the very formation chosen by the National Academy of Sciences in 1957 for nuclear waste. This repository was designed for all nuclear waste of any type, but was only permitted for transuranic (TRU) nuclear weapons waste after the Yucca Mountain site was chosen in the 1987 Amendment to the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act. TRU waste is similar to most of the high-level nuclear waste except for two constituents, cesium-137 and strontium-90 that have half-lives of 30 years.

But then things got very strange and political in the 1970s.

Unfortunately, the end point of our present policy is that most everything will stay right where it is, except for TRU waste already scheduled for WIPP. The implications for commercial power reactors, and sites like Hanford, Savannah River, Idaho and West Texas, are profound.



Geochemist and Energy scientist, speaker and author Dr. James Conca is Senior Scientist for UFA Ventures, Inc. in the Tri-Cities, Washington, a Trustee of the Herbert M. Parker Foundation, an Adjunct Professor at Washington State University in the School of the Environment, an Affiliate Scientist at Los Alamos National Laboratory and a [Science Contributor to Forbes](#) on energy and nuclear issues. Conca obtained a Ph.D. in Geochemistry from the California Institute of Technology in 1985, a Masters in Planetary Science in 1981, and a Bachelors in Geology and Biochemistry from Brown University in 1979.