Radioactive waste banned in Winsted

By JUNE PETERSON
Register Citizen Staff

WINSTED — Selectmen last night adopted a resolution banning disposal of low-level radioactive waste within town limits.

Selectmen acted after resident Linda Condon presented a petition with more than 200 signatures supporting the ban.

Condon, Winsted's representative to the regional landfill, wants to bring the resolution to the landfill board, where she said she hopes it will be adopted as an ordinance.

Condon said she hopes other towns that deposit trash in the regional landfill — Barkhamsted, Colebrook and New Hartford — will also petition for the resolution.

Low-level radioactive waste is all waste generated from nuclear power plant operations with the exception of spent fuel rods, Condon said. A 1986 policy adopted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission categorizes some kinds of nuclear waste as below regulatory concern, allowing it to be dumped in landfills, sewers and incinerators.

"There is no safe level of radiation exposure," Condon told the board. Others also spoke in favor of the ordinance, including community lawyer Charlene LaVoie, who said radioactive waste "promises to be the most serious environmental health issue for the rest of this century."

Resident Curtis Jenney said if radioactive waste was disposed of at the Barkhamsted landfill, it would make the problems at the polluted site worse, and possibly contaminate the nearby Farmington River. "This certainly is not the place for this type of waste to go," he said.

Selectman David A. Cappabianca, who cast the only dissenting vote, said he wanted to hear both sides of the question before making a decision. "We would simply be acting on emotions and not doing our homework," Cappabianca said.

Selectmen adopted the resolution with a 6-1 vote.