



Fact sheet: Demonstration of feasibility for the disposal of high-level waste

In 1988, the Federal Council accepted that a demonstration of feasibility for the disposal of low and intermediate level waste had been given ("Gewähr Project"). However, it rejected the demonstration of feasibility for the disposal of high-level waste included in the same project. The Federal Council instructed the holders of the operating licences for the existing nuclear power plants to pursue research activities and extend their studies to include non-crystalline host rock (sediment). On 28 June 2006, the Federal Council announced its decision concerning Nagra's exploration of the opalinus clay layers in the Zurich Weinland region (today northeast Zurich), confirming that the pending demonstration of feasibility had now also been provided for high-level waste.

On behalf of the country's nuclear power plant operators, Nagra carried out a variety of studies ("Gewähr" Project) up to January 1985 with the aim of providing the required demonstration of feasibility for all categories of radioactive waste. This project was based on two site models: one for low and intermediate level waste in marl host rock, and another for high level waste in the crystalline layers in northern Switzerland.

On 3 June 1988, the Federal Council announced that the demonstration of the presence of an extensive volume of rock (evidence of site suitability) with the required properties was not sufficient for the storage of high-level waste. Nagra was instructed to further pursue research activities and extend its studies to include non-crystalline host rock (sediment).

At the end of 2002, Nagra submitted its demonstration of feasibility for high-level waste to the relevant federal authorities, who carefully examined the documentation and forwarded it to the Federal Council for approval. On 28 June 2006, the Federal Council announced its decision concerning Nagra's exploration of the opalinus clay layers in the Zurich Weinland region (today northeast Zurich), confirming that the pending demonstration of feasibility had now also been provided for the disposal of high-level waste. At the same time, it rejected the proposal to focus further studies on the opalinus clay layer in the Zurich Weinland region as a potential storage site.