

DUSEL: Cost of developing Icicle had bearing on decision

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"It's been an extraordinary education," said Alliance member Anne Nowacki. "We had very solid reasons for opposing this; and the NSF had solid reasons for choosing another, better suited site."

The Alliance noted a long list of concerns, from multi-year major construction activities in the Icicle area to effects on water supply from lab operations.

The university lab team, however, in a statement made on Thursday, expressed disappointment and speculated that the cost of starting up the lab from the undeveloped Icicle site, in addition to community opposition, factored into the NSF decision.

"We appreciate having had the opportunity to take part in the evaluation process," said Marilyn Cox, director of the university's DUSEL office.

The evaluation included geological, architectural, engineering and economic studies that were commissioned by the university.

These, along with additional costs, some \$80,000 by the Port of Chelan and other state agencies have equaled perhaps half a million dollars, Cox estimated.

Jim Knapp, president of the Port's Board of Commissioners, said, "We were asked by the university to do a job and we did it, I think very well."

The Port hired a facilitator who coordinated the citizens' committee efforts.

In January the Port Commissioners passed a resolution in favor of continuing to study the lab idea.

Commissioner Mike Mackey said, "I think it's unfortunate that it didn't make the [NSF] list. "We felt that the process itself, the permitting agencies, should be allowed to point out the shortcomings of DUSEL, to show the good and bad points and we wanted to at least give it an opportunity to get to that stage."

Prior to the Port's resolution, the Leavenworth and Wenatchee Chambers of Commerce had also come out in favor

of what became known as "the DUSEL process", and they remained in favor, even after Leavenworth City Council voted unanimously against it on July 12 and a groundswell of DUSEL opposition became evident in the Leavenworth region.

Leavenworth Mayor Mel Wyles, after the council vote, said, "The people have spoken in no uncertain terms. We do not believe this is appropriate development for our area."

The NSF says it is now looking into "the merit of undertaking what would be a major construction project and suite of diverse research activities." Half a million dollars will be made available from the foundation for the two finalists to further investigate DUSEL development at the Henderson and Homestake sites.

"I know our scientists will continue working with the physics community as this idea goes forward, to help make an underground science and engineering lab a reality in this country," Cox said.