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ECA HOSTS PEER EXCHANGE ON NEXT STEPS FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY

On July 31 and August 1, 2014, Energy Community Alliance (ECA) members, officials from the Department of Energy’s (DOE) offices of Nuclear Energy and Environmental Management, industry, state legislature, tribal representatives, and other local government officials met in Las Vegas, Nevada, for the Peer Exchange on Next Steps for Nuclear Energy. The purpose of the meeting was to address the challenges the current political and economic

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SECRETARY MONIZ MEETS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

In July and August, Secretary Moniz traveled to several DOE sites where he met with local government officials, toured sites and discussed issues facing each site. ECA members from Savannah River (SRS), the Regional Coalition of LANL Communities (LANL) and Carlsbad (WIPP) met with Secretary Moniz.

SRS: A Place for Solutions
By Dr. Susan Winsor and Sanford Loyd

Sixty years ago, when the Nation needed solutions to unprecedented Cold War challenges driven by creating and maintaining an effective nuclear deterrent, the Savannah River Site delivered. And SRS has been delivering solutions ever since.

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Executive Committee

Chair
Mayor Tom Beehan
City of Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Treasurer
Councilor Fran Berting
Incorporated County of Los Alamos, New Mexico

Immediate Past Chair
Councilmember Robert Thompson
City of Richland, Washington

Vice Chair
Councilmember Chuck Smith
Aiken County, South Carolina

Secretary
Mayor Steve Young
City of Kennewick, Washington

ECA Tour Participants in front of the Sedan Crater at the NNSS
Congress left town in early August for their five week summer recess, leaving a number of major legislative items that may or may not be acted on by the end of the year. Both the House and Senate are scheduled to return to legislative work the week of September 8 and may remain in session through the week of September 22.

National Journal reports that the House will vote on a continuing resolution (CR) in September. That CR would fund the government through December, giving Congress the opportunity to consider final FY 2015 spending during a lame-duck session, when Congress resumes work after the elections.

Senate leaders have announced, however, that this year’s Defense Authorization bill (S. 2410) is considered a must-pass item for the September session. According to CQ, 141 amendments have already been filed on the bill but scores more will likely be introduced now that the bill appears headed to the floor. Time for debate may be very short, if the bill is considered, as the Senate has a packed legislative schedule. Many amendments will likely never be considered which may rankle a number of senators.

Senate passage of its defense authorization bill would trigger negotiations to resolve differences with the House version of the bill (H.R. 4435), which passed last May. House Armed Services Chairman Buck McKeon is already preparing for the likelihood that the Senate will not pass its bill, according to CQ. He has assured his members that they will have input into informal negotiations to craft a bill acceptable to both chambers later in the year.

One of the many differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill that will have to be reconciled is a provision establishing a Manhattan Project National Historical Park. The proposal has bipartisan support in the House where it was included in the authorization bill but has failed to pass the Senate twice before. According to The Oak Ridger, Washington, Tennessee, and New Mexico senators are working to find the best method to ensure the historical park becomes a reality. ECA Members are hoping this provision will pass this year.

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Just before the Senate adjourned for recess, the Appropriations Energy and Water Subcommittee released its bill and draft report for the Fiscal Year 2015 funding bill. Among other items, the bill appropriates more than $5 billion for defense environmental cleanup projects, $777 million for the Office of Nuclear Energy, and
environments present to the development of small modular reactors (SMRs), new nuclear plant licensing, the longevity of existing nuclear power plants, and the development of waste storage facilities. Meeting sessions were designed to consider the role of nuclear energy and the opportunities local communities have to create momentum for nuclear energy and nuclear waste management alternatives.

The meeting began with a tour of the Nevada Nuclear Security Site (NNSS) on July 30. Meeting participants visited Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Complex (RWMC), U1a Complex, T-1 Training Area, Apple II houses and the Sedan Crater. The tour gave meeting participants a first-hand view of nuclear waste disposal activities, emergency response training and nuclear weapons stockpile stewardship currently occurring at the site, as well as an understanding of the nuclear testing and history at the site.

The plenary session took place on July 31 and August 1, 2014, with presentations from local officials, ECA members, the Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy, Areva, the Nuclear Energy Institute, NuScale Power and congressional advisors.

The meeting focused on four key issues:

1. Future of Nuclear Energy in the U.S.
2. Small Modular Reactors
3. Update on the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant
4. How to Encourage Nuclear Power Development and Education

Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy, Dr. Pete Lyons, opened the meeting by outlining the Office of Nuclear Energy’s (NE) current priorities: small modular reactors (SMRs), reactor concepts, nuclear energy enabling technologies, fuel cycle research and development (R&D), and supercritical CO2 demonstration. In regards to the nuclear fuel cycle, he noted that the Department is researching advanced fuel cycle technologies with the potential to improve resource utilization and energy generation, while reducing waste generation, enhancing
safety and limiting proliferation risk. In addition, NE is focused on alternatives for uranium recovery, high burn-up spent fuel storage, transportation of nuclear materials, and as directed by Congress after the Fukushima accident, the development of fuels with enhanced accident tolerance. Dr. Lyons added that NE plans to develop options for decision-makers on the design of an integrated waste management system in FY 2015.

Dr. Lyons was joined by Paul Genoa from the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) and Dr. Ron Faibish from Argonne National Laboratory and current Fellow with the US Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in a panel discussion of the future of nuclear energy. Representing the industry perspective, Genoa stated that all of the attributes of nuclear are not valued. For example, he noted that more people got their energy from nuclear power than natural gas during the polar vortex, that 63 percent of carbon is avoided due to nuclear power generation, and nuclear power can reduce future price volatility. Yet at the same time, plants are scheduled for early retirement based on competition from other energy sources. When they do close, it will cause immediate economic losses at the local level and on state GDP. Dr. Faibish also spoke about the economic viability of nuclear energy now and its development in the future. He said there is a need to build a test reactor in the US and a community to host it. He also addressed some of the issues regarding quality control at WIPP, Hanford and with MOX. Faibish also said economic viability will be needed to keep reprocessing part of

the conversation and that legislation regarding nuclear waste could be dealt with again next year. During the question and answer period, Rick McLeod from SRSCRO asked when DOE will push the envelope on High-Temperature Gas Reactors and SMR technology, as advanced reactors will be more advantageous from an economic perspective for communities. Dr. Lyons responded that the NRC will need to develop the expertise to license these technologies.

The discussion of SMRs continued with a presentation by Mike McGough, the Chief Commercial Officer of NuScale Power, and was also part of the presentation by William Boyle from DOE. NuScale is part of Western Initiative for Nuclear (Project WIN), a ten-year project with governors and utilities to “fund ways to accelerate the introduction of SMRs in the marketplace. The company is also the recipient of DOE’s second small reactor grant for a project in Idaho that could create close to 1000 construction jobs at its peak for a duration of two or three years. He noted Dr. Lyons commitment to SMR development at DOE, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy’s vocal support, and the role for local governments in providing education and in support of state efforts to do economic impact studies to build political will. He explained that NuScale has spent 11 years working on its SMR technology, and significant time with the NRC to prepare them to accept NuScale’s application. He also said that NuScale will definitely need a utility partner on board to succeed.

Christine Gelles provided an update on the situation at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), discussing some of the lessons already learned while
(Continued from page 4)

ECA HOSTS PEER EXCHANGE ON NEXT STEPS FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY

the investigation is ongoing. In addition, DOE’s Technical Assessment Team working with the Accident Investigation Board has planned activities through the end of the year. When asked whether DOE-EM will meet its enforceable milestones, Gelles replied that it depends on accident recovery, investigations and ultimately, funding. Currently, Idaho is the transuranic site most directly impacted by the WIPP closure.

The next session of the meeting featured presentations by Bob Edmonds of AREVA Federal Services and Mayor Rebecca Casper of Idaho Falls. Their prepared remarks highlighted the potential for public/private partnerships to encourage nuclear development and education. The speakers noted that working together can help promote nuclear opportunities including advisory groups and workforce training programs. Mayor Casper highlighted the need to foster greater education on nuclear issues within communities around DOE sites. The discussion carried over into the final session with DOE representatives from the Office of Nuclear Energy and the Office of Environmental Management.

Alison Kennedy, from NE, highlighted that her office is strengthening education and outreach programs with stakeholders such as communities and tribes through grants and programmatic support (including sponsoring ECA’s Peer Exchange on Next Steps for Nuclear Energy). She also spoke about the Nuclear Energy University Programs (NEUP) that receives about 20 percent of NE’s budget. As part of NEUP, DOE recently announced it is awarding approximately $30 million for 44 university-led nuclear energy research and development projects, approximately $20 million for five integrated research projects, and 20 infrastructure support awards. NE is also looking to help educate younger students through The Harnessed Atom, a free middle school curriculum available on their website.

DOE-EM’s Kristen Ellis encouraged local governments and community representatives to communicate regularly with her office, “these are the questions we are hearing in our community – how can you help us?” She outlined a number of EM programs designed specifically to provide education and outreach. In 2010, EM partnered with the New Mexico Community Foundation to establish the Community Involvement Fund (CIF), which distributes monies to community-based groups near EM sites. CIF aims to increase and improve the quality of public participation in cleanup efforts. As of January 2013, more than $1 million in grants had been distributed. Ellis also pointed to EM’s timeline launched in March 2014. The timeline allows stakeholders and the public an opportunity to view the nuclear cleanup program’s achievements and related Cold War history in a first-ever interactive online platform.

The meeting ended with clear action items. Among them, ECA will continue to coordinate across local governments and with other stakeholders to share information on new nuclear power development. ECA will also look to engage more closely with NRC – and its two new commissioners once confirmed – to ensure local priorities on nuclear development, licensing and deployment are outlined and considered as part of any decision-making process. Finally, ECA will develop a list of existing local and state education and outreach programs on nuclear energy issues so that they can be replicated across communities. All meeting presentations are available on the ECA Website at: http://www.energyca.org/meetings.htm.
When Dr. Ernest Moniz, the nation’s 13th Secretary of Energy, visited the Savannah River Site (SRS) recently, he was quick to recognize that SRS still has unique capabilities that lend themselves to new Department of Energy and international missions. He singled out the Savannah River National Laboratory as a “national treasure” and H-Canyon, the only secure nuclear chemical separations plant in the U.S.

He also noted that SRS is the only site in the DOE complex to actually empty and permanently close high-level waste tanks and successfully convert high-level waste into glass -- a process pioneered at SRS that no other site has been able to duplicate.

Yes, throughout its history, SRS has been a place for solutions.

When America needed special materials like plutonium and tritium for the U.S. nuclear arsenal during the Cold War, SRS delivered.

When scientists needed a reliable, long-term energy supply for deep space missions, SRS delivered.

When DOE needed to convert Cold War-era liquid radioactive waste into a solid form for safe storage, SRS delivered.

When international treaties demanded that former world foes mutually abolish their stores of key ingredients for nuclear weapons, SRS delivered.

When the government wanted to demonstrate that high-tech nuclear production operations could co-exist harmoniously with the environment, SRS delivered, becoming the nation’s first National Environmental Research Park.

During his visit, Secretary Moniz paid tribute to the SRS workforce that made those solutions possible. It is impressive in size, formidable in talent and has been a juggernaut in the region’s economy for six decades. With nearly 11,000 highly skilled workers, SRS by itself has nearly as many workers as the combined total of South Carolina’s two other major industries – Boeing and BMW. Both South Carolina and Georgia benefit immensely from the SRS employees residing in our two states.

While we have a strong workforce now, the dedicated workers in the nuclear industry at SRS and local power utilities are reaching retirement age. It is yet another challenge in need of a solution.

As a region, we have been working hard with DOE’s help to boost future nuclear-related job opportunities for local residents through the Nuclear Workforce Initiative (NWI®). New training programs were created and implemented at five area colleges and universities under a Department of Energy grant which is administered by the NWI® and overseen by the SRS Community Reuse Organization.

The grant, now in its fourth year, has resulted in 300 local students being enrolled in the nuclear curricula developed under the grant. Nearly 60 have graduated and are beginning careers in the region. An additional 1,000 students have received information and training in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs. This next generation workforce is ready to assume leadership roles in our important nuclear culture as the existing workforce exits in retirement.

It is important that all of us recognize the value of the immense intellectual capital working at SRS safely and securely for decades. The Site’s management and skilled labor force and its one-of-a-kind facilities are uniquely qualified to handle many of the global nuclear challenges facing us now and in the future.

SRS capabilities have been in the spotlight in recent weeks amid public discussion of plans to receive and process used fuel containing Highly Enriched Uranium from German research reactors. Although our group -- the SRS Community Reuse Organization -- has taken the position that more information is needed to reach an informed decision on this particular project, we have no doubt the SRS people and facilities are up to the task.
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Secretary Moniz Meets with Local Governments

Despite its past significant contributions to national security and the fact that it is now in a cleanup mode, as community leaders, we believe the Savannah River Site’s mission will remain relevant in the years ahead. When it comes to complex nuclear issues and potential new missions in both the Federal and private sectors, America still needs a place for solutions.

We know SRS is prepared to deliver once again. We’re glad Secretary Moniz sees the same promise we do for the Savannah River Site’s future.

Dr. Susan Winsor is President of Aiken Technical College and Chair of the SRS Community Reuse Organization (SRSCRO). Sanford Loyd is a Certified Public Accountant in Augusta and serves as Vice Chair of the SRSCRO.

Visit with Secretary Moniz in Northern, NM

By: Darien Cabral, Director, Regional Coalition of LANL Communities

US Energy Secretary Moniz along with Interior Secretary Jewell were in Santa Fe, New Mexico on August 11th for the Quadrennial Energy Review, an administration-wide effort to receive regional recommendations regarding key infrastructure needed for transmission, storage and distribution of energy. The Regional Coalition of LANL Communities Chair, Española Mayor Alice Lucero, along with Coalition Director, Darien Cabral, were able to meet with Secretary Moniz prior to the start of the Energy review session. The meeting was attended by Kim Davis Lebak, head of the NNSA LANL Field Office and Pete Maggiore, Deputy Assistant Manager for the Environmental Projects Office at LANL in addition to members of the Secretary’s Washington staff.

Lucero and Cabral spoke of how important it was for northern New Mexico to see the expedient reopening of WIPP and the successful culmination of the 3706 campaign so that LANL, DOE and the Regional Coalition could begin to turn their attention to other areas of environmental concern. Mayor Lucero told the Secretary that the suspension of shipments to both WIPP as well as the storage site in Andrews, Texas had resulted in the loss of close to 100 jobs that had impacted her community. The Secretary estimated that WIPP could potentially open within about 18 months. Lucero and Cabral told the Secretary that prior to the WIPP incident the Regional Coalition strategy for promoting clean-up at LANL was to take a playbook from the success of the 3706 Campaign, and in coordination with the Citizens Advisory Board, DOE and the State Environment Department, prioritize discrete environmental campaigns with budgets and timelines that would receive across-the-board support and prioritization according to risk. We hoped to be able to put WIPP behind us as long as safety was not compromised and be back on that track as soon possible. Mayor Lucero stated how important it was that monies allocated to the WIPP remediation effort not be drawn from funds earmarked for LANL environmental management. The Secretary assured us that that was not the case.

The Regional Coalition brought up the fact that one of our Board’s top concerns was that new procurement policy being implemented by the

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Supply Chain Management Center (SCMC) in Kansas City under NNSA management, ostensibly to save money through order consolidation and high volume purchasing from large national companies, could potentially have a devastating effect on our local contractor community. The Coalition explained that by working together we believed that we could meet SCMC cost saving goals without transferring purchases to out-of-state companies. Close to half of the NNSA procurement budget is currently spent in northern New Mexico at Sandia and LANL. The Secretary instructed Kim Davis Lebak to follow up with us on that issue. Close to half of the NNSA procurement budget is currently spent in northern New Mexico at Sandia and LANL. The Secretary instructed Kim Davis Lebak to follow up with us on that issue. This was a major victory, as until then, despite concern expressed by our Congressional Delegation, we felt that NNSA was not giving this issue the attention it deserved. The Coalition has since followed up successfully with Ms. Davis-Lebak.

One reason we received so much support from the Secretary is that he had previously worked at LANL and was familiar with northern New Mexico. Northern New Mexico is a very unique part of the country and is hard to explain to people who are not familiar with it. We felt that the Secretary understood our concerns. He stated that unless there are vibrant economies surrounding DOE installations DOE facilities will not be able to adequately fulfill their missions. That is exactly what we wanted to hear.

Secretary Moniz visits WIPP and meets with Carlsbad Officials

By: Kyle Marksteiner

Mayor Dale Janway and Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Ernest Moniz quickly established a positive tone during the Secretary’s Aug. 11 and 12 visit to Carlsbad and the nearby Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.

“We kept an open mind, and it paid off,” Janway said about the community’s successful recruitment of the underground repository for transuranic (TRU) waste decades ago. “A long relationship between the Carlsbad community and the Department of Energy would develop. Overwhelmingly, this has been a positive relationship.”

Moniz also focused on the historically strong relationship between the community and the DOE, asking everyone to work together to get past the February fire and radiological incident that resulted in a halting of waste shipments to the facility. A recovery effort is ongoing.

“You stick with us, and we’re sticking with you,” he told the crowd of about 150 gathered at the Monday night town hall meeting in Carlsbad. “Let me make no bones about it. WIPP has to come back. This is really an absolutely core facility for the country.”

In his introduction, Moniz also spoke about the importance of the community consent model and noted the facility’s additional important role as a science laboratory. He defended the DOE’s...
reluctance to give specific dates for its recovery plan.

“What happened here in Carlsbad was unacceptable, but the exposure levels were at such a low level to have no discernible health impact,” he stated. “We need to make sure, moving forward, this never happens again, but we also need to keep in context what it really means.”

NMED Secretary Ryan Flynn also noted the long-term effects of the recovery effort.

“What we do in response, I think, is going to ensure the long-term viability of, not only this facility but, the nuclear enterprise throughout this country,” he added.

About 15 Carlsbad residents, with signs indicating support for WIPP and welcoming the DOE Secretary to Carlsbad, turned out at the airport prior to Monday’s town hall. Following the town hall, Moniz had a dinner meeting with area officials and the congressional delegation.

“We had the opportunity to talk in a little more detail,” said former state representative John Heaton. “It was a good opportunity to talk about preventing these events from happening again, and the need for a plan for additional observable accountability oversight to rebuild confidence. We are advocating putting together a consortium of existing regulators led by the Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring and Research Center.”

The following day, Moniz and the congressional delegation took a surface tour of WIPP, 26 miles away, and met with WIPP workers.

“Overall, it was a great visit,” Janway concluded. “We are thankful to everyone who made the visit possible and hope to see the Secretary back celebrating a WIPP that is open for business.”

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Secretary Moniz Meets with Local Governments

Carlsbad Field Office Manager Joe Franco, left, and U.S. Congressman Steve Pearce, right, speak with DOE Secretary Ernest Moniz on Aug. 11, 2014, in Carlsbad
According to an August report by Congressional Research Service nuclear weapons policy expert Jonathan Medalia, Congress and the Administration will have to address a number of questions if increased nuclear weapons trigger production is to become a reality. Those triggers, known as “pits,” are a critical component of weapons. A pit is a hollow plutonium shell that is imploded with conventional explosives to create a nuclear exploding that triggers the rest of the weapon. While U.S. policy is not to build new nuclear weapons, some argue that the pits on existing weapons may need to be replaced to ensure a working, credible deterrent.

Pit production has been virtually stagnant since 1989 when the Rocky Flats Plant in Colorado was raided by the FBI due to suspicion of environmental crimes. Rocky Flats was eventually dismantled, but produced as many as 2000 pits per year during the Cold War. Not until 2007, when Plutonium Facility 4 (PF-4) at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) was selected to develop a production process, did pit manufacturing resume. In that year, LANL produced 11 pits but hasn’t produced more than 6 in any year since then. In total it has produced 30 pits; DoD plans would call for up to 80 pits to be produced per year by 2030.

Medalia’s report notes that in order to reach DoD’s goal, Congress and NNSA will have to consider whether there is enough laboratory space at PF-4 in Los Alamos, the amount of “Material at Risk,” and how much associated analytical chemistry can or should be performed at LANL. The House version of the FY2015 Defense Authorization bill (H.R. 4435) sets a schedule for production of pits to be used for nuclear weapons.

Opponents of the plan cite a 2007 Report by the JASON Defense Advisory Panel that says the useful life of a plutonium pit is up to 100 years. That would give many of the existing pits another 50 years before they would need to be replaced. Some also note that the roughly 15,000 plutonium pits manufactured at Rocky Flats and stored at the Pantex Plant in Amarillo, Texas, are already more than enough.

See the Jonathan Medalia’s August CRS report here.
See the JASON Defense Advisory Panel report here.

Two water towers that dominated the Los Alamos National Laboratory skyline have been demolished bringing the DOE one step closer to transferring the land for future commercial or industrial use. The towers were located in Technical Area 21, an early site of the Manhattan Project work that was the location of the world’s first plutonium processing facility. Groundbreaking tritium research also took place in the area.

The demolition, currently carried out by The Lakeworth Group LLC of Los Alamos, a woman-owned small business, is part of a continuing large-scale environmental cleanup that began in 2009.

“By bringing down these towers, we are making a noticeable difference in the skyline at Los Alamos,” Los Alamos Field Office Environmental Programs Assistant Manager Pete Maggiore said. “This is another positive step towards eventual transfer of this property to Los Alamos County.”
CREEDON SWORN IN AS NNSA PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR

Madelyn Creedon was sworn in as the Principal Deputy Administrator for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) on August 7, 2014 by Secretary Ernest Moniz. She was confirmed by the Senate in late July. Creedon most recently served as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs, where she led on issues including U.S. nuclear forces, missile defense, and DoD cybersecurity and space issues. She served as counsel for the Senate Armed Services Committee and has prior experience at the NNSA and Department of Energy.

In July, Secretary Moniz said, “Madelyn Creedon’s confirmation comes at a critical point for the National Nuclear Security Administration. She is well-prepared for her new role at the Department as it follows a long career of public service in national security, including at the Department of Defense, with the Senate Armed Services Committee, and, previously, at the Department of Energy. NNSA Administrator Klotz and I thank the Senate for their attention to Madelyn’s nomination, and look forward to working with her.”

She will assist NNSA Administrator Frank Klotz in the management and operation of the agency, including leading on policy matters in support of the Administration’s nuclear security agenda.

NRC APPROVES NEW NUCLEAR WASTE RULE

This month the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) unanimously approved the final “continued storage rule,” - formerly known as the “waste confidence” rule – allowing for the long-term storage of nuclear waste at closed nuclear plants and lifted a self-imposed ban on the licensing of nuclear reactors. This move ends more than two years of uncertainty about the practice of storing nuclear waste at shuttered nuclear plants, according to CQ Roll Call.

In 2012, a federal court struck down a 2010 NRC decision allowing storage of spent nuclear fuel at defunct plants for up to 60 years. The court found that the NRC had not performed a full environmental analysis for the storage, and directed the agency to consider the possibility that a geologic repository for permanent disposal of spent fuel may never be built. In addition, the NRC was to do further analysis of spent fuel leaks and fires.

In response, the NRC conducted a more comprehensive generic environmental impact statement (GEIS), looking at the impact of keeping spent fuel at any reactor site after the reactor’s licensed period of operations over 60 years (short-term), 100 years (long-term) and indefinitely. Analyses of the impacts for each time period on land use, air and water quality, and historic and cultural resources were also conducted. Ultimately, the NRC found keeping spent fuel on site indefinitely was acceptable provided there is proper oversight and maintenance of the fuel. The

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statement also confirmed findings of the draft released in September 2013, that assumes canisters and casks containing spent fuel would be replaced once every 100 years.

The rule does not, however, specifically authorize, license or permit nuclear power plant licenses to store spent fuel for any length of time.

The approval of the final rule lifts the NRC’s voluntarily suspension of any decisions on the licensing or relicensing of nuclear reactors until a new rule was in place. This postponement had little impact on plants already in line for approval, however, as work continued over the last two years on 21 pending applications.

The issue of on-site long-term nuclear waste storage has been a major issue since work on the Yucca Mountain repository in Nevada was suspended by the administration. Congress has yet to act on any storage alternatives to that site.

The Commission expects the final rule and GEIS to be published in September. It will become effective 30 days after publication in the Federal Register.

See the NRC Press Release here.
See the GEIS here.

NRC Approves New Nuclear Waste Rule

NRC SEeks Comment on Proposed Changes to Radiation Protection Regulations

In late July, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued advance notice of proposed rulemaking and requested public comment on potential changes to current radiation protection regulations. The regulations exist to establish standards of protection for both members of the public and occupational workers from ionizing radiation resulting from activities conducted under licenses issued by the NRC.

Current radiation protection regulations have traditionally aligned with those issued by the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) and used internationally. New changes have been made to the ICRP regulations since the NRC last updated its own regulations in 1991; and the NRC has identified six policy and technical issues to be addressed as it develops the basis for proposing similar changes.

The six areas include:

1. Updating NRC regulations to more closely align with ICRP methodology and terminology for dose assessment.
2. Occupational dose limit for the lens of the eye.
3. Dose limit for Embryo/Fetus of a Declared Pregnant Occupational Worker
4. Individual Protection – Making every reasonable effort to maintain exposures to radiation “As Low As is Reasonably Achievable” (ALARA) Planning
5. Metrication – Units of Radiation Exposure and Dose
6. Reporting of Occupational Exposure

Each issue and specific questions for comment are outlined in the July 25 Federal Register here.

NRC will hold a series of public meetings to discuss the issues during the comment period that ends on November 24, 2014. Notice of the meetings – as well as any related documents – will be posted on the federal rulemaking website here.

How to submit comments:

Comments can be submitted on the federal rulemaking website listed above or can be submitted by email to rulemaking.comments@nrc.gov. The docket ID NRC-2009-0279, should be included in the subject header.

Comments can also be sent by fax to Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 301-415-1101; or by mail to:
Secretary
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001
ATTN: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff
WASTE CONTROL SPECIALISTS TO EXPAND OPERATIONS IN TEXAS

State regulators in Texas recently voted unanimously to permit Waste Control Specialists, the private (and only) low-level radioactive waste disposal facility in the state, to expand operations. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) approved changes to the license to allow the site to accept up to 9 million cubic feet of low-level radioactive waste for disposal – more than tripling the former waste volume limit of 2.39 million cubic feet.

In addition, TCEQ also reduced the company’s legal liability paid to the state to cover costs in the event of an accident or the company abandoning the waste. The Dallas Morning News reports that the $136 million figure was cut by more than $50 million. According to the commission, the adjustment is based on the fact that the current site is smaller than originally planned. However, if in the future the site expands further, the figure will be readjusted again.

Waste Control Specialists also got approval to store depleted uranium at the site.

The disposal facility, located in Andrews County, West Texas, brings in direct revenue to the county - five percent of each disposal service fee or about $4 million since operations began just over two years ago.

Also in West Texas is Loving County, which was featured in a New York Times article this month as it considers hosting an interim storage site for spent nuclear fuel. Texas Governor Rick Perry ordered state legislators to study the issue earlier this year. See Matthew L. Wald’s New York Times article, “County of 95 Sees Opportunity in Toxic Waste.” August 7, 2014 here.

DOE SELECTS DEACTIVATION CONTRACTOR FOR PADUCAH

On July 22, the Department of Energy (DOE) announced its selection of Fluor Federal Services, Inc. to carry out deactivation activities at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant (GDP) in Kentucky. The GDP is a Government-owned uranium enrichment plant built in the early 1950’s to produce enrichment in support of commercial and military reactors and weapons development activities.

The award was made as part of the Nationwide Environmental Management ID/IQ Unrestricted Contract in accordance with the Department’s responsibilities for cleaning up the nation’s gaseous diffusion buildings.

The award and task order are intended to support preparation of the site for Deactivation and Decommissioning of the former uranium enrichment facilities. The contract’s value is estimated at approximately $420 million over three years.

The DOE announcement can be found here.
(Continued from page 2)

D.C. Update

notes a lack of “progress in improving project management so NNSA can complete projects on time and budget.” The House version (H.R. 4923) passed on July 10, 2014.

Next Congress

The outcome of this year’s midterm election will be vital in determining not just control of the Senate but who will be wielding the gavel of a number of important committees. Chairman Hastings (R-WA), a long-time community leader and advocate of the Department of Energy’s environmental management responsibilities, of the House Natural Resources Committee is retiring after 10 terms. The leadership of the Senate’s Energy and Natural Resources Committee could be shaken up next year as Chairwoman Mary Landrieu (D-LA) is in a tight reelection fight and Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) will be term-limited out because of GOP caucus rules. The Armed Services Committees will both undergo leadership changes as Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) and Rep. Buck McKeon (R-CA) are not seeking reelection. Their successors will likely be determined shortly after the elections. According to a number of analysts,
**8 BUILDINGS REMOVED FROM HANFORD PLUTONIUM PLANT**

Eight more buildings have been torn down at Hanford’s Plutonium Finishing Plant, a facility labeled by the Department of Energy (DOE) as the most complex and hazardous facility at the site. That brings the total to sixty-one buildings demolished or removed at the mostly decommissioned site since 2008, according to the Tri-City Herald. DOE is required by law to have the production portions of the plant demolished by 2016 to make way for continued cleanup operations.

The plant operated for 40 years starting in 1949, processing about two-thirds of the plutonium required for the country’s nuclear weapons program during the Cold War. As part of a plan to consolidate the nation’s weapons-grade materials at one site, the last of the plant’s plutonium was sent to Savannah River in 2009. Over the last eight years, the look of the entire plant has changed as the water tower, security facilities, underground waste tanks, and administrative buildings have been torn down.

“Taking down and removing these office buildings and support structures provides a change in the skyline at the plant that brings us closer to completing this important cleanup project,” said Bryan Foley, a deputy project director for the Department of Energy. Another official noted that work was proceeding at a safe and steady rate.

**DOE IG REPORT: MANAGEMENT OF THE NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION’S BIOSAFETY LABORATORIES**

The DOE Inspector General (IG) released an audit report on August 6, “Management of the National Nuclear Security Administration’s Biosafety Laboratories.” In response to the increase in infectious diseases and the threat of bioterrorism, the DOE and NNSA operate laboratory facilities that perform research with biological agents in accordance with various biosafety level (BSL) protocols. Building on a 2005 report that found that DOE had not developed a plan for construction and operation of laboratories using the riskiest agents, this report was initiated “to determine whether NNSA managed its biosafety laboratories effectively.”

The IG reported that a potential $9.5 million expansion of biosafety laboratory capabilities at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) “may not be the most effective use of resources.”

“Specifically,” the report says, “NNSA identified the development of a BSL-3 facility at LANL as its preferred alternative for meeting biosafety laboratory needs even though it had not fully considered the need for and cost effectiveness of additional capacity. Nor, had it developed a sound basis for measuring the utilization of existing facilities – a critical factor in determining the need for additional capacity. Despite the lack of information on the need for additional capacity and current laboratory utilization rates, LANL was also considering building a new BSL-2 facility.

“In particular, NNSA proposed development of a facility with two BSL-3 laboratories at LANL. Additionally, LANL is in the early planning stage for constructing a new BSL-2 facility. The estimated cost to open LANL’s new BSL-3 and to construct/open BSL-2 capabilities was about $1.5 million and $8 million, respectively. Given current budget realities, plans to develop additional capabilities without fully demonstrating a need may not be prudent.”

The report suggests NNSA reassess its need for biological research facilities given that the bulk of such research is handled by the Department of Homeland Security. The IG notes that DOE’s and NNSA’s biosafety research activities suffer from coordinated and specialized program oversight.

The report is available [here](#).
### 2014 Congressional Calendar

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### Notes

- House and Senate in Session
- Senate in Session Only
- House in Session Only
- Federal Holiday

Please Note: Congressional schedule is subject to change.
## 2014 Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 1 – September 8</td>
<td>House Recess</td>
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<td>August 5 – September 8</td>
<td>Senate Recess</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 8</td>
<td>Federal agencies submit their initial budgets to the Office of Management and Budget for FY 2016; final budgets are required to be submitted to Congress on Feb. 2, 2015.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of September 8 or 15</td>
<td>Expected House of Representatives floor action on a Continuing Resolution to fund government operations beginning Oct. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of Sept. 8, 15, or 22</td>
<td>Expected Senate floor action on a Continuing Resolution to fund government operations beginning Oct. 1</td>
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<td>September 26</td>
<td>70th Anniversary of B-Reactor</td>
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<td>September 30</td>
<td>End of FY 2014</td>
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<td>October 1</td>
<td>Beginning of FY 15</td>
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<td>October 20-23</td>
<td>Exchange Monitor Decisionmaker’s Forum</td>
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<td>October 20-24</td>
<td>National Nuclear Science Week 2014</td>
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<td>November 4</td>
<td>Midterm Elections</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 12-14</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Meeting, New Orleans, LA. For more information contact Allison Finelli at <a href="mailto:Allison@energyca.org">Allison@energyca.org</a>.</td>
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**Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) Bulletin**

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*Thank you to the Department of Energy’s Environmental Management Office for its support of the ECA Bulletin through cooperative agreement No. DE—EM002400***