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NNSA – ADDING COMPLICATION TO A COMPLICATED MISSION

Issue Summary:

- Last week NNSA announced it would end MOX Facility construction (again);
- SRS would receive a new pit production mission at the MOX facility location;
- Los Alamos would continue with its plutonium pit research and production mission;
- Based on the decisions – New Mexico (where the MOX and other plutonium material would be sent) said that alternative for disposal for this material (otherwise known as ‘dilute-and-dispose’) is a concern as NNSA would need New Mexico to change the WIPP permit to allow the material to be disposed of at WIPP’
- South Carolina Attorney General has threatened to sue NNSA over the MOX decision.

In a [statement](#) released on May 10 from the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and the US Department of Defense (DoD), the agencies announced the adoption of a two-pronged strategy for producing plutonium pits used in the

development of the nation’s nuclear weapons.

The policy makers at NNSA—who have been trying to terminate the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication

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ECA HOLDS ANNUAL CONFERENCE WITH SENIOR DOE LEADERSHIP



ECA members, senior Department of Energy (DOE) Officials, members of the contracting community, and other stakeholders met in Washington, DC on April 12 for ECA’s Annual Conference to discuss how local communities can continue to engage

with DOE to ensure progress on cleanup and other activities.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN), DOE Under Secretary for Science Paul Dabbar, high-ranking DOE

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Legislative Update



House Energy and Water Appropriations

On May 16, the House Appropriations Committee held a full committee [markup](#) of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 [Energy and Water Appropriation bill](#). The bill passed out of Committee on a 29-20 partisan vote, after Republicans blocked several Democratic amendments to add policy riders that would have restored funding for the DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and ARPA-E to FY2018 levels.

Overall, the \$44.7 billion bill, which funds DOE, the Department of Interior, the Army Corps of Engineers, and other independent agencies, comes in at \$1.5 billion above FY2018 enacted levels, and \$8.17 billion above the President's FY2019 budget request.

In total, DOE received \$35.5 billion, an increase of \$1 billion from FY2018 enacted levels and \$5.5 billion above the President's budget request.

Environmental Management: The Office of Environmental Management (EM) received \$6.86 billion, with defense environmental cleanup receiving the largest share of that amount, at \$5.75 billion. In total, the FY2019 House numbers for EM are \$26 million more than the President's FY2019 budget request, but \$26 million short of FY2018 enacted levels. Of all the cleanup sites, Oak Ridge and Los Alamos received the largest cuts in their budget from FY2018 enacted levels, with \$109.7 million and \$22 million less respectively.

National Nuclear Security Administration: The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) received \$15.3 billion, which is approximately \$2 million above the President's budget request, and \$644.2 million above FY2018 enacted levels. NNSA Weapons Activities received \$11.2 billion, Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation received \$1.9 billion, and the Naval Reactors program received \$1.8 billion.

Nuclear Waste Storage & Disposition: DOE's Yucca Mountain and interim storage programs received a significant boost of \$100 million above the President's budget request, for a total of \$220 million. Like the budget request, the House appropriations bill for FY2018 funded the Department's nuclear waste disposal and defense nuclear waste disposal programs at \$120,000, but that amount was eventually zeroed out of the final appropriations bill after facing backlash in the Senate. For FY2019, House appropriations are sending a clear message to the Senate by nearly doubling the President's budget request; that message is: we want to see Yucca Mountain move forward.

During the full committee [markup](#) of the House bill, Appropriators rejected an amendment introduced by Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-PA) that would have eliminated the \$100 million boost for Yucca Mountain, and used the money to restore funding for DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and ARPA-E to FY2018 levels. The Committee voted 28-21 on party lines against the amendment.

Nuclear Energy: The Office of Nuclear Energy (NE) received \$1.35 billion, which is \$15 million above FY2018 enacted levels and nearly \$6 million above the President's budget request. The House bill includes a \$133 million boost in funding for nuclear reactor concepts research and development.

Legacy Management: The Office of Legacy Management (LM) received \$158 million, consistent with the President's budget request and \$4.2 million above FY2018 levels.

The full House Committee report can be found [here](#).

Senate Energy and Water Appropriations

On May 22, the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations

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Legislative Update

Committee approved their FY2019 Energy and Water spending bill. Next, the full Committee is scheduled to [mark up](#) the bill on May 24.

At the time of writing, the text of the spending bill has not yet been released, though a Committee [press release](#) reports that the bill totals \$43.76 billion, \$566 million above FY2018 enacted levels and \$7.24 billion above the President's budget request.

National Nuclear Security Administration: In the Senate bill, NNSA received \$14.8 billion, which is \$111 million above the FY2018 enacted levels, \$311 million below the President's Budget request, and \$500 million below the FY2019 House bill. In total, the Senate provides \$10.9 billion for Weapons Activities, \$1.6 billion for Naval Reactors, and \$1.9 billion for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation.

Environmental Cleanup: The Senate gave \$7.2 billion for EM activities, \$56 million above the FY2018 enacted level, \$581 million above the President's budget request, and \$340 million above the House FY2019 bill. Defense environmental cleanup received the lion's share of the EM budget, with \$6 billion.

Nuclear Waste Storage & Disposition: The bill includes a pilot program for consolidated nuclear waste storage and funding to allow DOE to store nuclear waste at private facilities that are licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Unlike the House bill, the Senate omitted funding for Yucca Mountain.

Nuclear Energy: DOE's NE Office received \$1.2 billion, consistent with FY2018 enacted levels, \$449 million above the President's budget request, and \$150 million less than the House FY2019 bill. The Senate bill includes \$302 million for Reactor Concepts Research, Development, and Demonstration and \$22 million for the industry-led Advanced Reactor Concepts program.

ECA will continue to update readers on the FY2018 funding levels for all relevant DOE programs once the Senate Appropriations Committee releases the bill text and accompanying Committee report.

National Defense Authorization Act

The House Armed Services Committee advanced the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY2019 ([H.R. 5515](#)) after holding a markup

hearing on May 9. The NDAA establishes overall funding levels and policies for DOE's national security programs. The bill now heads to the House floor for a vote.

Overall, the House bill would authorize \$22.1 billion for DOE activities, which is \$357 million above the President's FY2019 budget request. The House committee bill matched the budget request for \$136 million for Nuclear Energy.

For defense environmental cleanup, the House bill would authorize \$5.68 billion, which is a \$300 million decrease below the FY2018 enacted level. Most sites would see a decrease in the defense environmental cleanup portions of the authorization; however, Savannah River Site and WIPP would see increases of \$160 million and \$20 million respectively.

Hanford: In the portion of the committee report regarding cleanup, the committee expressed concern that there are "continuing reports of toxic vapors emanating from nuclear waste tanks at the Hanford Site being inhaled by workers." The Secretary of Energy is directed by the committee to provide semiannual briefings—beginning in August this year—detailing any vapor inhalation events and measures taken to protect workers. Another section of the bill would require the Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management "to promptly notify and provide a briefing to the congressional defense committees after any improper release of contamination resulting from defense waste at the Hanford Site."

Yucca Mountain: During the bill markup, the committee approved an amendment related to the transportation of waste to Yucca Mountain. The Secretary of the Air Force raised concerns about the impact of DOE's proposed transportation route on the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR). The Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of Energy, is required to provide a report to congressional defense committees by January 15, 2019 that describes "any impacts that the Yucca Mountain Project would have on DOD and DOE activities at NNSS, NTTR, and any other defense facilities in proximity to Yucca Mountain or the proposed transportation route."

Savannah River Site: The NDAA would authorize \$335 million for the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility (MOX Facility) at Savannah River, matching the FY18 enacted level. But note

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Legislative Update

that the Administration has (again) proposed terminating the program completely. The House committee expressed its belief that “a pit production capability is a national security priority, but seeks clarification on whether and why the 2018 NPR has modified the pit production requirement.” The committee requested a report on timelines, justifications, and costs regarding the pit production requirement, and also an assessment of potential reuse of plutonium pits currently in the U.S. inventory.

National Nuclear Security Administration: NNSA would see a nearly \$800 million increase compared to the FY18 enacted level, totaling \$15.4 billion in the House NDAA. The budget request called for \$15.1 billion in funding for NNSA.

In addition to the funding increase, the House committee discussed issues related NNSA infrastructure and personnel. The committee report expressed concern that the backlog for security clearances is preventing NNSA from “hiring qualified personnel in a timely manner.” Therefore, the NNSA Administrator is required to brief Congress on efforts NNSA is taking to streamline the security clearance process. The committee reiterated its belief that infrastructure remains critical for to accomplish NNSA national security missions. To improve this infrastructure, the House bill contains increased funding for recapitalization and repair of NNSA facilities.

Local Taxes: The House committee included language in its report regarding management and operating (M&O) contracts. The report cautioned about the State of New Mexico’s recent approach to pass state legislation to require NNSA and M&O laboratory contractors “to continue paying certain State taxes as a for-profit entity, even if the M&O contract is awarded to a non-profit entity.” The committee believes that this approach may interfere

with the Federal Government’s ability to seek maximum value for such contracts and instead noted that these issues may be addressed through other means such as payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) to support local communities.

During the week of May 21, the Senate Armed Services subcommittees and full committee will mark up their version of the NDAA. At the same time, House and Senate appropriations committees continue their work on FY 2019 appropriations.

Yucca Mountain Bill Passes House

On May 10, through a bipartisan vote of 340-72, the House passed the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2018 ([H.R. 3053](#)). The bill, sponsored by Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL) and co-sponsored by 109 other Representatives, sets a path forward for DOE to resume the licensing activities for the Yucca Mountain repository in Nevada. It would also allow DOE to build and operate interim storage facilities for the nation’s spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste.

“The bill we’re considering today reinforces a promise that the United States Congress, on behalf of the entire federal government, made to our constituents a generation ago. Today, we’re keeping that promise,” Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said on the House floor.

The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration, where many think it unlikely to pass, let alone be taken up for consideration by committee. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) opposes the Yucca Mountain project, and would most certainly place a hold on the bill. Sen. Heller is currently running for reelection in Nevada in what is expected to be a tight race this November.

A fact sheet of H.R. 3053 can be found [here](#). For more insight on the bill and Yucca Mountain’s current prospects, see the article on page 5.

BIG MONTH FOR YUCCA MOUNTAIN...OR IS IT?

On May 10, the U.S. House of Representatives demonstrated overwhelming bipartisan support voting 340-72 in favor of the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act ([H.R. 3053](#)), a bill that directs the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to move forward with developing both a permanent and temporary storage program for spent nuclear fuel (SNF) and defense high-level waste (HLW) that currently sits in 121 communities in 39 states.

The bill provides for the resumption of activities related to the development of a permanent geologic repository at Yucca Mountain; tackles the broken funding mechanism for nuclear waste management and disposal; specifically addresses the need to remove the legacy defense nuclear waste sitting at federal facilities across the country; allows the federal government to work with the private sector on a solution; and strengthens DOE's program management and organization responsible for implementing the nation's nuclear waste program.

Finally – and of great importance to ECA – the bill gives the State of Nevada and local stakeholders the opportunity to engage with the Federal government as the host for the repository. As the parties that will be most directly impacted, ECA believes they should be engaged throughout the decision-making process to ensure their challenges are addressed and benefits are realized of taking on this national mission.

The comprehensive approach included in H.R. 3053, the persistent efforts of Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL) (the sponsor of H.R. 3053) to champion the cause and demonstrate the urgency to do so, and passage of the bill in the House are all very positive developments. However, it is hard to be optimistic given that, once again, ECA knows that the Senate will not hold any hearings on this bill before the midterm elections. Furthermore, if Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) keeps his seat, it is unlikely there will be any hearings on the bill even after the November elections. In fact, in a [guest column](#) in the *Las Vegas Sun* on May 21, Senator Heller noted, “As long as I am in the U.S. Senate, Yucca Mountain is dead. It is that simple [...] Stopping Yucca Mountain has always been one of my top legislative priorities.”

Furthermore, Heller, alongside fellow Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), sent a [letter](#) on May 17 to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water calling for the exclusion of federal funding for a repository at Yucca Mountain.

The issue of what to do with the nation's nuclear waste has long been debated. In fact, in early May the Congressional Research Service released a new [report](#) looking at recent developments and a history of waste management that “has posed difficult issues for Congress since the beginning of the nuclear power industry in the 1950s.” But still the stalemate continues and here is where things stand:

No funding has been appropriated for Yucca Mountain activities since FY2010. The current Administration included funding for Yucca Mountain its FY2018 budget request; the House also provided funding in their spending bill, but the Senate did not, so no funds were ultimately appropriated. The Administration again has included funding for Yucca Mountain in FY2019 request but prospects for support in the Senate are dismal.

- **American taxpayers are already liable for upwards of \$34 billion** due to the failure of the federal government to dispose of the commercial nuclear industry's SNF.
- **DOE has not taken nuclear waste fees from nuclear power generators since May 2014** due to the lack of a permanent repository program.
- **DOE's environmental liability has almost doubled** from a low of \$176 billion in 1997 to a fiscal year estimate in 2016 of \$372 billion, according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO). **DOE's Office of Environmental Management's (EM) portion of that liability has grown by over \$90 billion** during the same period, from \$163 billion to \$257 billion.
- **The law of the land is not being followed** and communities currently hosting commercial SNF or the government's legacy defense HLW are already *de facto* interim storage sites facing

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FY 2018/2019 Budget & Appropriations Highlights*

(amounts in thousands of dollars)

	FY 2018 Enacted	FY 2019 Requested	FY 2019 House Bill
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY	34,520,049	30,609,071	35,494,251
Environmental Management	7,126,448	6,601,366	6,869,220
Defense Environmental Cleanup	5,988,048	5,630,217	5,759,220
Hanford/ Richland	863,192	658,171	863,192
Office of River Protection	1,560,000	1,438,513	1,480,053
Idaho National Laboratory	434,071	359,226	433,200
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory	1,175	1,704	1,704
Separations Process Research Unit	4,800	15,000	15,000
Nevada NNSA Sites	60,136	60,136	60,136
Sandia National Laboratory	2,600	2,600	2,600
Los Alamos National Laboratory	220,000	191,629	198,000
Oak Ridge Reservation	400,219	226,206	290,569
Savannah River Site	1,312,314	1,656,180	1,376,634
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant	376,571	403,487	396,907
Non-Defense Environmental Cleanup	298,400	218,400	240,000
West Valley Demonstration Project	75,000	63,687	75,000
Gaseous Diffusion Plants	101,304	100,575	100,575
Uranium Enrichment Decontamination & Decommissioning Fund	840,000	752,749	870,000
Oak Ridge	194,673	151,039	179,454
Paducah	205,530	270,224	223,000
Portsmouth	381,271	415,458	413,557
Legacy Management	154,606	158,877	158,877
National Nuclear Security Administration	14,668,952	15,091,050	15,313,147
Weapons Activities	10,642,138	11,017,078	11,200,000
Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation	1,999,219	1,862,825	1,902,000
Naval Reactors	1,620,000	1,788,618	1,788,618
Nuclear Energy	1,205,056	757,090	1,346,090
Science	6,259,903	5,390,972	6,600,000
Yucca Mountain and Interim Storage	---	120,000	220,000
Nuclear Waste Disposal	---	90,000	190,000
Defense Nuclear Waste Disposal	---	30,000	30,000

* These figures are compiled from different sources: the Office of Management and Budget, the Congressional Appropriations committee reports, and press releases. There are some discrepancies in how each calculates government spending.

MAJOR CONTRACTS AND AWARDS

LANL Management Contract Award Expected in Coming Weeks

The Management and Operations (M&O) contract for Los Alamos National Laboratory is expected to be awarded in the coming weeks. Bidders are taking steps that indicate an announcement by NNSA is imminent.

Last week, the University of Texas System regents held a Special Called Meeting, where they voted to approve \$7 million in funds to prepare for the transition period if awarded the contract. Other bidders include the Texas A&M University System, partnered with the University of California system and likely one or more companies, and Purdue University, who is rumored to have partnered with Bechtel Corp.

In contract documents, NNSA noted that it is “committed to ensuring a contract is awarded in time to allow a four month transition before the current contract expires on September 30, 2018.” To follow through with this commitment, NNSA would need to award the contract by the end of May.

The current contract is held by Los Alamos National Security LLC, which is made up of the University of California, Bechtel, BWXT Government Group, Inc., and URS. The new contract is worth more than \$22 billion for up to 10 years.

DOE Announces \$60 Million in Industry Awards for Advanced Nuclear Technology Development

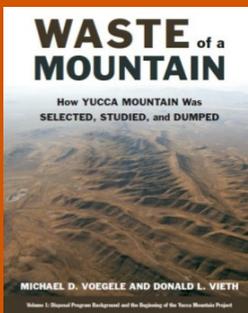
On April 27, DOE [announced](#) \$60 million in federal funding for 13 nuclear technologies projects. The awards mark the first within NE’s U.S. Industry Opportunities for Advanced Nuclear

Technology Development funding opportunity announcement (FOA).

Upon making the announcement, Secretary Rick Perry stated, “Making these new investments is an important step to reviving and revitalizing nuclear energy, and ensuring that our nation continues to benefit from this clean, reliable, resilient source of electricity.”

Through public-private partnerships, the awards intend to improve commercial nuclear capability by seeking the expertise of higher education institutions and public and private laboratories. There are three funding pathways for the selected awardees. The First-of-a-Kind (FOAK) Nuclear Demonstration Readiness Project pathway aims to address major advanced reactor design projects for existing plants. The Advanced Reactor Development Projects pathway seeks to “the capabilities and commercialization potential of advanced reactor designs and technologies.” The Regulatory Assistance Grants pathway would “provide direct support for resolving design regulatory issues, regulatory review of licensing topical reports or papers, and other efforts focused on obtaining certification and licensing approvals for advanced reactor designs and capabilities.”

X Energy, LLC and NuScale Power received funding in the FOAK Nuclear Demonstration Readiness Project pathway. General Atomics, Elysium Industries USA, BWXT Nuclear Energy, Inc., and NuVision Engineering Inc. were selected in the Advanced Reactor Development Projects pathway. Analysis and Measurement Services (AMS) Corporation and General Atomics were selected in the Regulatory Assistance Grant pathway.



Yucca Mountain proponents and opponents are preparing for a fresh fight in the 115th Congress, but the politics of today are still greatly colored by the long history of the proposed repository. The book, *Waste of a Mountain*, tells the story of the 70-year-long effort to dispose of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste at Yucca Mountain. The book, written by Michael Voegele and Donald Vieth, details the history of government action in the effort to locate and develop a site for the permanent disposition of the waste. The book is available on the Pahrump Valley Museum’s website [here](#).

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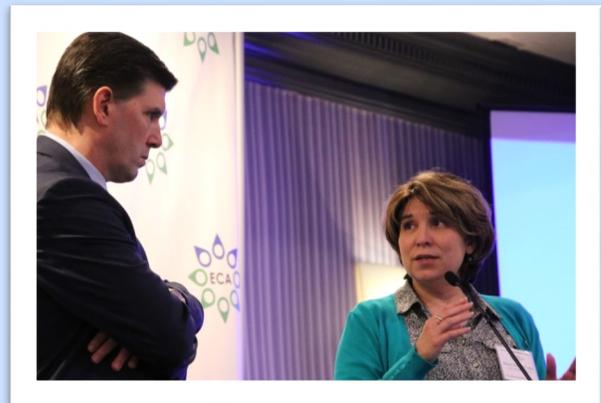
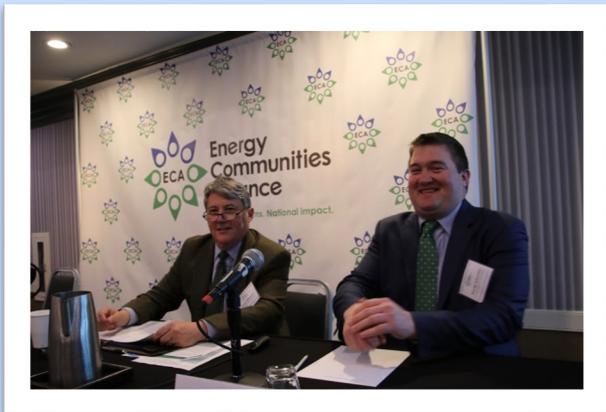
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NNSA – Adding Complication to a Complicated Mission

Facility (MOX facility) construction since the last Administration—told South Carolina this week to look at the shiny object in front of them (a new plutonium pit mission) versus the multi-billion dollar MOX facility project that began construction in 2007.

At the same time, the mission for plutonium pit production at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has been downgraded—moving from being the sole producer of pits to potentially sharing the mission with South Carolina.

“To achieve DoD’s 80 pits per year requirement by 2030, NNSA’s recommended alternative repurposes the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina to produce plutonium pits while also maximizing pit production activities at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.” the NNSA/DoD statement reads. “This two-prong approach – with at least 50 pits per year produced at Savannah River and at least 30 pits per year at Los Alamos – is the best way to manage the cost, schedule, and risk of such a vital undertaking.”

In a [joint statement](#), South Carolina lawmakers, consisting of Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Tim Scott (R-SC), and Representatives Joe Wilson (R-SC) and Jeff Duncan (R-SC) responded to the announcement, stating, “DOE has proposed reconfiguring the current MOX facility so that it can be used to produce plutonium pits. While we support the opportunity for any new mission at SRS, we are concerned DOE will encounter a skeptical Congress and American public on any proposal they put forward.”

Stranded Plutonium – No Path Again

But what about the stranded plutonium originally to be processed at MOX in South Carolina? NNSA’s strategy for removing surplus plutonium from South Carolina is through a ‘dilute-and-dispose’ method, where the plutonium is combined with inert materials that render the mixture stable and arguably fit for disposal at a site such as the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico, subject to WIPP being able to accept such waste (which it currently can not).

In his [letter to Congress](#) ending the MOX mission, Perry stated, “I can confirm that the Department is committed to removing plutonium from South Carolina intended to be disposed of in the MOX facility. We are currently processing plutonium in South Carolina for shipment to [WIPP] and intend to continue to do so.”

NNSA has not consulted New Mexico on this plan, however. The state has been telling NNSA for months that if NNSA takes away the pit production mission from LANL, the disposal path for MOX waste at WIPP may not be viable as it requires New Mexico to change the WIPP permit.

In the May 24 Senate Appropriations Committee [markup](#) of the FY2019 Energy and Water bill, Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) stated, **“WIPP was not envisioned to take high-level waste or weapons-grade plutonium. So far, DOE has done nothing to secure New Mexico support besides asking for a new permit that will be decided by the new Governor. Yet they have offered no funding for independent science to assure New Mexicans that this is safe. They have offered no economic assistance like we once received for accepting WIPP. And their outreach to the New Mexico delegation has been an announcement to shift another mission—plutonium pit production—away from Los Alamos to South Carolina. So far it’s a bad deal.”**

South Carolina also expressed concern, blasted the NNSA decision to abandon the MOX facility which “is now more than halfway complete” in pursuit of the ‘dilute-and-dispose’ alternative. “DOE says it now wants to pursue ‘dilute and dispose’ but that plan was already considered and rejected,” the lawmakers stated. “DOE plans to press ahead even though ‘dilute-and-dispose’ has not been fully vetted. This could lead to the permanent orphaning of at least 34 metric tons of weapons grade plutonium, enough for thousands of warheads.”

Furthermore, the South Carolina Attorney General announced he would sue DOE over the MOX decision.

“The legal challenges to move from MOX in South Carolina to ‘dilute-and-dispose’ in New Mexico will be enormous,” the South Carolina lawmakers said. “The Department of Energy’s reputation for the handling and oversight of large-scale projects like

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NNSA – Adding Complication to a Complicated Mission

MOX were considered suspect. But given what can only be called a debacle, DOE is going to be challenged like never before.”

This may seem to be a large communications mishap and a failure of NNSA to understand the vast implications of their decisions, but ECA interprets it as a very calculated decision with the ultimate end goal to be the end of the MOX mission.

- South Carolina has a long road ahead to begin construction for a new pit production facility at the Savannah River Site (SRS). The local community may be supportive of new potential mission at the site; however, NNSA would have to start the NEPA process (and deal with the legal challenge of bringing a new mission to SRS) and would need Congressional authorization and an appropriation for the project. SRS will not see new construction for some time directly related to this new mission. In the interim, we will see if the South Carolina delegation will allow the decision to end MOX go forward, or whether it will continue to push for MOX funding as it has successfully done for the past eleven years.

- LANL will continue to improve its facility for plutonium pits. A new contractor is being selected and the facilities will continue to work at developing the new pits.
- The State of New Mexico, who is electing a new Governor this November, must now debate changes to the WIPP mission related to surplus plutonium. Concurrently, the Administration is looking at expanding the mission for WIPP for other types of waste; this surplus plutonium issue will potentially add to public confusion as to what is actually being disposed of at the site.

Involve Communities Supporting These Critical Defense Missions

Throughout all of this, local communities have been discussing the issues with one another. Local communities are the stakeholders actively supporting DOE/NNSA’s national security mission at its sites throughout the country. They are key constituents and need to be involved in the decision-making process. They have been clear that this is not a South Carolina verses New Mexico issue, but instead—like other issues around the DOE/NNSA complex—is one that needs to be resolved to ensure these critical defense missions are successful. ECA continues to advocate for DOE/NNSA to consult with local communities and seek their input prior to making decisions.

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ECA Holds Annual Conference

officials from the Offices of Environmental Management (EM), Nuclear Energy (NE), and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), and industry representatives were on hand to interact and speak with the group.

ECA Chair and Roane County Executive Ron Woody opened the meeting by recalling the priorities ECA prepared for the current Administration back in 2016 during the Administration transition; namely: involving local government in DOE decision-making, improving DOE



Pictured from left to right: ECA Members Councilman Chuck Smith, Will Williams, David Jameson and Rick McLeod

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Big Month for Yucca Mountain...or Is It?

increased security and storage costs for waste that was not intended to still be on-site in 2018.

- **Trust in the federal government on nuclear waste management and disposal continues to degrade.**

So what is next?

Like Rep. Shimkus, ECA wants the licensing process for Yucca Mountain to resume. Yucca is the law of the land and there is much to be learned even if the licensing process and litigation of Nevada's contentions demonstrate that a geologic repository should not be built at Yucca Mountain. Host communities deserve more than the 'kick-the-can-down-the-road' approach when there are potentially workable alternatives for some of the waste in the shorter-term.

One such alternative, as identified in a [2017 ECA report](#), is for DOE to reconsider how waste is classified. If DOE were to base treatment and disposal decisions on the actual characteristics of waste and risk to human health and safety – rather than continuing to classify waste based on origin – defense HLW could move more efficiently out of host communities using a smarter, risk-based decision framework. This would allow EM to cut years of operations; reduce the number, size, and duration of storage facilities needed before a HLW repository is available; accelerate tank retrievals and closures; and realize savings of more than \$40 billion.

ECA was optimistic when, under the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2018, DOE was tasked with conducting an evaluation of the feasibility, costs and cost savings of classifying covered defense nuclear waste as other than HLW. That report was due to Congress no later than February 1, 2018. At the time of writing, however, nothing has been submitted.

Ultimately, nuclear waste exists; for the sake of national security, energy security, and the protection of environmental and human health, something eventually has to happen. Today there are communities interested in potentially hosting nuclear waste storage facilities. How long will they wait for some demonstration that the federal government is willing to act? There are companies in the U.S. working to develop advanced reactors that can burn spent nuclear fuel. Will there be a market in the U.S. or will the government's inability to deal with waste issues now mean fewer states will be interested in increasing nuclear energy production in the future?

Congress and the Federal government have a responsibility to the communities hosting nuclear waste. Up to this point, decisions have been based on politics rather than science and that approach has translated to money for nothing. H.R. 3053 addresses many of the issues raised over the past few years and proposes good solutions. Only by following the law can we really know if Yucca Mountain is a workable solution. But given how long it has taken just to get here, ECA advises that when other, less contentious disposition paths for some of this waste are available, we need to be looking at them too.



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SECRETARY PERRY TESTIFIES ON DOE FY2019 BUDGET

Secretary of Energy Rick Perry [testified](#) in front of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology in support of the administration's FY2019 DOE budget request on May 9. Perry highlighted programs and goals included in the \$30.6 billion request that are relevant to the committee—modernizing the nuclear arsenal, achieving exascale computing, advancing domestic energy production, and addressing nuclear waste management.

Secretary Perry noted the 16 percent increase in the NNSA budget over the FY2017 level—a total of \$15.1 billion for the upcoming fiscal year. The increase will be used to invest in modernizing NNSA infrastructure at sites like Y-12 and Savannah River Site.

For nuclear waste management, Secretary Perry highlighted several measures the DOE budget would take to dispose of the nation's nuclear waste. The administration requested \$110 million to resume licensing for the nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain. \$10 million was requested for an interim storage program, which he argued would add “flexibility to the system that will move materials from sites across the country to its ultimate disposition.”

Secretary Perry discussed legacy waste, mentioning the requests for funding at Hanford for the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant; the Liquid Waste Management Program at Savannah River Site; improving WIPP operations; deactivation and demolition of facilities at Oak Ridge; and Idaho's Integrated Waste Treatment Unit.

Regarding nuclear energy, Secretary Perry discussed the \$757 million request for the Office of Nuclear Energy. DOE requested \$163 million for the Reactor Concepts Research, Development and Demonstration program. Of that amount, \$54 million would be dedicated toward the Advanced Small Modular Reactor R&D subprogram. He testified, “This new subprogram is a one-time effort to fund cost-shared early-stage design-related technical assistance and R&D, the results of which are intended to be widely applicable and employed



Secretary of Energy Rick Perry

by nuclear technology development vendors for the purpose of accelerating the development of their advanced SMR designs.”

During questioning by the committee, Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) asked Secretary Perry about his stance on Rep. Shimkus's nuclear waste bill. Secretary Perry argued that “there are 38 states that have nuclear materials stored in less-than-satisfactory places,” but did not express a stance on that specific bill.

Rep. Jacky Rosen (D-NV) questioned Secretary Perry about the Yucca Mountain transportation routes, noting the Secretary of the Air Force is concerned about the impact on Air Force activities in Nevada. Perry reiterated that he is in constant contact with the Department of Defense regarding the transportation routes. He clarified that he does not believe it is his role to take a particular stance on Yucca Mountain, but instead simply follow the law as written.

The House Appropriations Committee advanced the FY 2019 Energy and Water Development appropriations bill on May 17, while the Senate Appropriations Committee is scheduled to markup their energy appropriations bill May 22. In the coming weeks, the full House is expected to vote on the energy appropriations bill.

HOUSE HOLDS HEARING ON DEVELOPMENT, REGULATION, AND COMPETITIVENESS OF ADVANCED NUCLEAR ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES

The House Energy and Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Energy held its fourth [hearing](#) as part of the Committee's 'DOE Modernization' series. The hearing was to review four bills concerning the development, regulation, and competitiveness of advanced nuclear energy technologies. The four bills under consideration were:

- [The Nuclear Utilization of Keynote Energy Act \(H.R. 1320\)](#): A bill to revise the functions of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) by establishing new transparency and accountability measures on the NRC budget and fee structure and by developing the regulatory framework necessary to enable the review and licensing of advanced nuclear reactor designs.
- [The Advanced Nuclear fuel Availability Act \(Discussion Draft\)](#): A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to establish and carry out a program to support the domestic availability of high-assay low enriched uranium (HA-LEU) for commercial use.
- [Nuclear Energy Competitiveness \(Discussion Draft\)](#): A bill to amend the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 to improve the process by which the Secretary of Energy authorizes the transfer of civilian nuclear commerce technology and assistance.
- [Report on Pilot Program for Micro-Reactors \(Discussion Draft\)](#): A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to develop a report on a pilot program to site, construct, and operate micro-reactors at critical national security locations.

In Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Rep. Greg Walden's (R-OR) opening statement, he said, "The bills we will examine provide key ingredients to enhance a core national security and energy security mission of the [Energy] Department, and of the nation: promoting the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology."

Testifying during the hearing were Edward McGinnis, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the DOE Office of Nuclear Energy, and Brent Park, the Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Proliferation at NNSA. The witnesses' testimonies

covered a wide range of issues, including: US energy security, national security, and electrical grid resiliency; the supply of HA-LEU fuel to power advanced nuclear reactor designs; proliferation and distribution risks associated with the development of HA-LEU fabrication capabilities; and the competitiveness of the US nuclear research infrastructure, among other topics.

When questioned about the potential retirement of dozens of US nuclear plants, McGinnis suggested that letting too many of the plants retire (some prematurely) could leave the US vulnerable. "If we continue with this trend and we don't find a way to re-vector into a sustainable growth potential, well, it goes beyond electricity resiliency, to the global strategic state. It goes directly to national security interest and not just energy security interest," he told the Committee.

McGinnis also discussed the advantages that the development of an advanced nuclear fleet will have for US energy security and grid resiliency. "I would like to reinforce the importance of micro-reactors as a key aspect for resiliency and also, of course, for establishing a secure energy supply chain by having indigenous generation on site. There is tremendous potential value to having micro-reactors potentially on site, supplying power for a [military] base or federal or non-federal facility," he stated.

Many designs for micro-reactors (considered to be any nuclear reactor producing between 1MWe to 15MWe power) and other types of advanced reactors currently under development by firms throughout the US require the use of HA-LEU. HA-LEU is fuel that has greater than 5% of the fissile U-235 isotope, but is still enriched less than 20%, the cutoff for highly-enriched uranium (HEU). Currently, the US does not have the ability to fabricate HA-LEU for commercial use, though it does still produce small quantities of HA-LEU from down blended HEU for use in research reactors. When asked about the HA-LEU commercial demand from US firms developing advanced reactors, McGinnis stated, "They all, virtually all, will require HA-LEU. Maybe in smaller amounts, but if they prove out their reactor concept and business line, they'll be selling many [reactors]."

(Continued on page 19)

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ECA Holds Annual Conference

policies and practices, and investing in host communities and the DOE complex.

Representative Chuck Fleischmann

Rep. Fleischmann, whose Tennessee district includes the Oak Ridge National Lab, kicked off the meeting, talking about fiscal year (FY) 2018 and 2019 appropriations. He noted that the FY2018 appropriations bill was a major success for ECA communities, with the highest requests for EM in more than a decade, and ample funding for NE as well. He mentioned the importance of DOE and local governments working together on shared goals such as environmental cleanup and workforce development. He also spoke of the importance of ECA members and their Representatives participating in the bipartisan House Nuclear Cleanup Caucus in order to drive cleanup progress.

DOE Undersecretary for Science Paul Dabbar

DOE Under Secretary for Science Paul Dabbar addressed ECA members for the first time at the Annual Conference, with a progress-oriented message. “We’re focused on removing roadblocks to success,” Dabbar stated.

A former member of the Environmental Management Advisory Board (EMAB), Dabbar is very familiar with much of the cleanup activity occurring across the complex, and used his knowledge to speak to the synergy between DOE’s Office of Science (and the many laboratories it operates) and EM’s cleanup mission, stating that “the DOE complex is a world leading complex.”

Commenting on the high funding numbers for cleanup in both the FY2018 enacted spending bill and the FY2019 President’s budget, Dabbar said, “We want to move things forward. We want to identify where things were a challenge in the past and figure it out together. Everyone’s on the same page. Everyone wants to get risk reduction done.”

Office of Environmental Management

Anne White, Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, attended the Annual Conference and spoke with ECA members in the

(Continued on page 16)



Pictured from left to right: ECA Members Rebecca Casper and Pam Larsen and Bob DeGrasse of Bechtel Global Corporation



EM Assistant Secretary Anne White speaking during lunch at the ECA Annual Conference



NNSA Principal Assistant Deputy Administrator David Huizenga and ECA Member Councilman Chuck Smith

(Continued from page 15)

ECA Holds Annual Conference

audience. ECA was pleased about the attention she paid to the ECA organization so shortly after her Senate confirmation, and looks forward to having her speak at many more meetings in the future.

Mark Gilbertson, Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regulatory and Policy Affairs at EM, spoke at the meeting about a variety of issues: EM’s effort to review Order 435.1, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) status and transuranic (TRU) waste, policy and planning for new decontamination and decommissioning projects, infrastructure improvements, excess facility transfers, and the EM National Laboratory Network.

Kirk Lachman, EM Deputy Chief for Field Operations gave an update on activities and successes across the cleanup complex, including WIPP, which has received over 12,100 shipments of TRU waste to date. “I don’t have to tell you how important WIPP is to the complex,” Lachman said. “It is vital that we invest in WIPP and keep the cleanup mission going by keeping that facility operational and improving.”

Lachman mentioned other cleanup successes, including the completion of treatment of nitrate salt drums at Los Alamos, groundbreaking on the Mercury Treatment Facility at Oak Ridge, the melter replacement at the Defense Waste Processing Facility and completed work on the Saltstone Disposal Unit at Savannah River, and the cleanup of the 618-10 burial ground at Hanford.

Mike Nartker, Director of EM’s Office of External Affairs discussed how his office is working to make sure EM communications are proactive rather than reactive—to ensure that information about cleanup efforts is reaching the public on a regular basis rather than only when things go wrong. He spoke about the importance of being transparent and regularly communicating with local governments as a way of building a sense of trust among DOE stakeholders and the Department.

Office of Nuclear Energy

NE’s Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Edward McGinnis spoke to ECA members about both the current fleet of nuclear reactors and the potential for advanced nuclear reactors in the United States. He spoke about how nuclear energy was an important component of the US energy mix, providing resiliency to the energy grid, and how it is energy dense, where relatively little fuel can provide more carbon-free energy than other fuel sources. McGinnis reflected on the need for the US to both preserve the existing fleet of nuclear reactors in the US while simultaneously encouraging the

(Continued on page 17)



Mark Gilbertson, EM Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regulatory and Policy Affairs



Kirk Lachman, EM Deputy Chief for Field Operations



Pictured from left to right: ECA Members Will Williams, Rick McLeod, Kristin Henderson and DOE’s Kristen Ellis



Pictured from left to right: ECA Members Rick McLeod, Mark Watson and Seth Kirshenberg

(Continued from page 16)

ECA Holds Annual Conference

growth of the advanced nuclear industry, siting companies like NuScale and their progress toward building the first small-modular reactor (SMR) in Idaho.

National Nuclear Security Administration

NNSA Principal Assistant Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation David Huizenga addressed ECA members with a description of current and future projects being undertaken by the agency with regard to weapons activities, nuclear nonproliferation, and the nuclear navy. Though now at NNSA, Huizenga formerly served at EM as acting Assistant Secretary, bringing to his current position a breadth of understanding of the EM program and the importance of consulting and working with local communities throughout the decision-making process.

ECA Members and DOE Contractors

Oak Ridge city manager Mark Watson, Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization President and CEO Rick McLeod, and the Energy Facility Contractors Group (EFCOG) Chair Billy Morrison spoke to meeting attendees about local community and contractor priorities in 2018. Mark Watson stated during his presentation, that in order for DOE activates to be strong, they must first be operating in a host city that is equally as strong. This includes having well maintained and funded municipal services such as water, sewer, electricity, police, fire, etc., and also having good quality school districts and vital infrastructure such as roads. He noted that local communities are partners with DOE in cleanup efforts, and regular communication with local elected officials is key.

Rick McLeod spoke about some of the challenges and priorities for communities surrounding the Savannah River Site, which included the issue of clarifying the definition of high-level waste (HLW), the funding source of employee pensions, and talent development and workforce transition.

Billy Morrison focused his presentation on environmental cleanup, and the cooperative it requires between local governments, contractors, and the federal government. He noted that there are several barriers to cleanup that can be resolved with decisive action on the part of DOE and cooperation from local government partners, including clarifying the definition of HLW,



ECA's Kara Colton and Bechtel's Bob DeGrasse



Oak Ridge City Manager and ECA Member Mark Watson



ECA Members DOE Officials, members of the contracting community and other stakeholders attending the 2018 ECA Annual Conference.

(Continued on page 18)

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ECA Holds Annual Conference

DOE acquisition ‘bow wave’

<p><u>Extended</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIPP M&O • Y-12/Pantex • Moab • Portsmouth D&D <p><u>Completed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ DUF6 ✓ Sandia ✓ Nevada National Security Site ✓ Paducah ✓ Los Alamos Legacy Cleanup 	<p><u>Under evaluation or in process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ SRS Liquid Waste ☑ Los Alamos M&O ☑ Hanford Mission Essential Services ☑ PPPO consolidated support <p><u>Remaining to be completed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Hanford tanks ★ Hanford plateau ★ SRS M&O ★ Oak Ridge D&D ★ Nevada EPS
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addressing the human capital cliff, and fully utilizing expanded options and approaches that will be opened up by DOE’s anticipated Order 435.1 update.

Later during the conference, Longenecker & Associates’ Martin Schneider spoke to ECA members about the status of EM acquisitions and contract management. He noted that DOE is in the midst of an acquisition blitz, or “bow wave,” saying, “With the 2018 appropriations and momentum under the new DOE administration, we’re poised to get stuff done.”

In total, Schneider discussed how there is potentially \$100 billion in total contract value to be awarded between 2016 and 2019, with roughly 25 percent of

that total remaining in the “capture phase,” with acquisition yet to begin.

Insights on the 115th Congress

The final panel of the conference featured Christopher Hanson of the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Bob DeGrasse of Bechtel Global Corporation, and John Kotek of the Nuclear Energy Institute. The panel, which was largely question-and-answer-based, discussed their impressions of the 115th Congress, and opportunities they see for progress.

Hanson acknowledged the success of the FY2018 appropriations levels for EM, NE, and NNSA, noting that a lot of progress can be made with those high levels of funding. For FY2019, he expects that there will be a continuing resolution (CR) through the November midterm elections at least. DeGrasse agreed that proceedings on Capitol Hill might be stalled till after the elections, including defense authorization.

Regarding Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), Hanson says that he expects the DOE report to congress required in the FY2018 Omnibus will take a while to complete, so he doesn’t expect another fight in the House regarding PILT, but that we might expect it in 2020.

Kotek spoke of a variety of issues, including advanced nuclear reactors (such as SMRs), the closure of existing nuclear reactors across the country, state legislation favoring nuclear power, and the concept of “Nuclear Diplomacy,” or how when the US builds a nuclear plant in another country, they embark on a long-term relationship that involves security oversight, training, and the eventual decommissioning of the nuclear reactor.



Pictured from left to right: John Kotek of the Nuclear Energy Institute, Christopher Hanson of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Kara Colton of the Energy Communities Alliance, and Bob DeGrasse of Bechtel Global Corporation.

(Continued from page 14)

House Holds Hearing on Development, Regulation, and Competitiveness of Advanced Nuclear Energy Technologies

Concerning the need to develop domestic production capabilities for HA-LEU, Rep. Jerry McNerney (D-CA) asked Mr. Park if the development of production capabilities carried unnecessary proliferation risks. Park replied that HA-LEU development is a “balancing act” and that “We can’t delay [development] forever, [...] but we can’t expedite without doing the right [nonproliferation] analysis.” He noted that NNSA is taking steps to promote US industry and nonproliferation objectives simultaneously.

Lastly, when discussing the US nuclear research infrastructure, McGinnis told the Committee that the US had not supplemented its research capabilities in recent years. “If we’re going to get back in the game, we’ve got to get our fuel cycle research and development (R&D) capabilities back where they belong—back in a robust area. We’re on a good trajectory now. [...] All I can say is that strong support [from Congress] is greatly appreciated as we work with a private-public posture where we are finding the sweet spot to support and dispatch the technical challenges that, with our laboratories and our capabilities, the US industry can most benefit from.

To access a recording of the hearing or to read the full witness testimonies, visit [here](#). A Committee press release on the hearing is available [here](#).

BILL CLASSIFYING WEST VALLEY WASTE AS DEFENSE WASTE TAKEN UP BY HOUSE

On May 18, the Environment Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a [hearing](#) to discuss [H.R. 2389](#), a bill that would reauthorize the West Valley Demonstration Project for FY2017-FY2026, and seek to classify all radioactive waste at West Valley as waste resulting from atomic energy defense activities, as defined in section 2 of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982.

During the hearing, Representative Tom Reed (R-NY) testified that, “The federal government should provide a disposal path for all waste on the site. Records show that the majority of waste at the site was a result of reprocessing federally-owned nuclear fuel—most of it from the federal government’s Hanford facility in Washington State [...] The result of that reprocessing that went to the federal government in some part for weapons research or weapons use.” He argued that all radioactive waste at the site is resulting from the atomic energy defense activities and should therefore be treated as defense waste. Doing so would provide a disposal path for waste at the site (at sites like the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant or the planned Yucca Mountain repository) that currently doesn’t exist for the waste under its current classification.

EM Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regulatory and Policy Affairs Mark Gilbertson also testified during the hearing, expressing concern that categorizing the West Valley waste as defense waste, rather than its current classification as

commercial waste, would force the Department to assume the environmental liability and cost associated with cleaning up and disposing of the waste.

Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY) asked Gilbertson how the Department could view the waste at West Valley as commercial when the reprocessed material produced at the site were “all usable or characterized as defense-related.” Gilbertson replied that the waste is still considered commercial waste because the material was originally sold to a commercial entity for use, even though the commercial entity used the material for defense-related purposes.

Mr. Noah Shaw, the General Council of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) also testified at the hearing, noting that West Valley is the only site managed by EM with onsite waste that DOE calls commercial. West Valley also houses the only transuranic (TRU) waste in the nation that is prohibited for disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico, meaning that the limited dollars appropriated to the cleanup efforts at the site have to be spent to contend with the potentially permanent onsite storage of TRU waste, making the local communities surrounding the site de facto hosts for nuclear waste storage.

A committee vote for H.R. 2389 has not yet been scheduled. ECA will continue to track the bill and any companion bills in the Senate.

OFFICIALS MARK OPENING OF MOUND COLD WAR DISCOVERY CENTER



Officials cut the ceremonial ribbon to mark the opening of the Mound Cold War Discovery Center. Pictured, left to right, are DOE Office of Legacy Management (LM) Mound Site Manager Sue Smiley, U.S. Rep. Michael Turner of Ohio, Dayton History Director Brady Kress, Mound Science and Energy Museum Association Vice President Paul Lamberger, Miamisburg Mayor Richard Church Jr., DOE Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental and External Affairs Douglas Little, LM Team Lead Gwen Hooten, Dayton History Board of Trustees Director Mike Leesman, and Mound Development Corporation President Eric Cluxton

MIAMISBURG, Ohio – Officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Mound Cold War Discovery Center at the former Mound Plant site on April 23. U.S. Rep. Michael Turner of Ohio and Miamisburg Mayor Richard Church Jr. were present at the event, along with Douglas Little, DOE Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental and External Affairs.

The center is a major remodel of an existing Mound building performed by Dayton History, the official

historical organization for Montgomery County, Ohio. DOE's Office of Legacy Management (LM) provided funds to Dayton History through a cooperative agreement. EM completed cleanup at [Mound](#) in 2010. Workers disposed of nearly 20,000 cubic meters of soil and decontamination debris in the cleanup, which focused on the Operable Unit-1, a former mixed-waste landfill. Mound supported the nation's nuclear weapons and energy programs until decommissioning began in 1993.

NATIONAL ACADEMIES HOLDS PUBLIC MEETING ON SURPLUS PLUTONIUM DISPOSAL AT WIPP

Disposal of Surplus Plutonium in the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant: Meeting 6



On May 2, the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS) held its sixth meeting in a series of meetings regarding a study of DOE's conceptual plans for disposing of surplus plutonium in the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). The meeting was a data-gathering session for the NAS panel assigned to the study.

The panel heard from Lindsay Lovejoy, a New Mexico environmental lawyer; Debarah Holmer, from the DOE Office of Environment, Health, Safety, and Security; and Virginia Kay, from the NNSA Office of Material Management and Minimization.

During the meeting, Lovejoy spoke about obstacles to the disposal of surplus plutonium at WIPP; chiefly, that under the Land Withdrawal Act (LWA)

the legal capacity of WIPP is not enough that all of the surplus plutonium—having been treated through a dilute-and-dispose method—would fit inside the facility. Additional panels within the mine would need to be excavated in order to fit all of the plutonium, and an amendment would need to be made to the LWA to allow it to be placed into WIPP.

A video of the full meeting proceedings can be found [here](#), alongside links to each of the panelist's presentations. The next NAS public meeting on this issue will be June 27 in Irvine, CA. NAS has a [study webpage](#) with information about the ongoing study for DOE, and plans to provide recommendations to DOE by the end of December 2018.



Check out Daughters of Hanford, a project that highlights women's perspectives of the Hanford nuclear site. The project offers a cross-section of politicians, leaders, and environmental cleanup advocates - all women who were part of history and the future talent putting their minds on the nuclear site's toughest problems. More information [here](#).

NUSCALE SMALL MODULAR REACTOR DESIGN COMPLETES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION PHASE 1 REVIEW

On April 30, small modular reactor (SMR) developer NuScale Power [announced](#) that their design certification application (DCA) had completed the first phase of review by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

“We are thankful for the rigorous review of our revolutionary nuclear design and greatly appreciate the government recognizing the importance of furthering NuScale’s advancement,” said NuScale Chairman and Chief Executive Officer John Hopkins. “Our technology means significant economic and job benefits for the country and it’s positioned to revitalize the domestic nuclear industry by virtue of NuScale’s affordable, flexible, and safe solution to providing zero-carbon energy.”

The NRC began review of NuScale’s DCA in March of 2017. According to an article by [Forbes](#), phase one of the NRC review process is the most intensive phase, involving more hours and effort than the remaining five phases combined. For the NRC to have completed phase one in a little over a year may be a promising sign for NuScale. The NRC is expected to complete the full review of the DCA by September 2020.

Nuscale is partnering with the Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS) to build their first SMR at the Idaho National Laboratory. The facility would be operated by Energy Northwest, a utility experienced in nuclear power plant operation. The project is expected to be completed by the mid-2020s.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY** | Legacy Management

2018 Long-Term Stewardship Conference

*Preserving the past, preparing for the future:
A broad perspective on long-term stewardship*

SAVE THE DATE AUGUST 20–23, 2018
Two Rivers Convention Center • Grand Junction, Colorado

WIPP TO RECEIVE NEW UNDERGROUND VENTILATION SYSTEM

The DOE Office of Environmental Management (EM) announced on May 14 that the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, NM will receive an infrastructure upgrade in the form of a new \$288 million underground ventilation system, called the Safety Significant Confinement Ventilation System (SSCVS).

EM Assistant Secretary Anne White made the announcement, saying, “This will be a significant improvement for WIPP from cleanup sites across the DOE complex.”

The SSCVS will assist with the mining and maintenance operations as well as the emplacement of increased shipments of transuranic (TRU) waste to WIPP from across the DOE complex, including the Idaho, Oak Ridge, Savannah River, Los Alamos

National Laboratory, and Waste Control Specialists (WCS) sites.

WIPP’ current underground ventilation system has operated in filtration mode since the 2014 WIPP incident, resulting in a lower airflow than without filtration and forcing WIPP’s contractor to introduce a schedule where mining and waste emplacement are conducted on separate shifts. The SSCV will provide outlets for both filtered and unfiltered air, allowing for the two activities to occur simultaneously. It will also allow for easier filter replacement and preventative maintenance activities.

The SSCVS installation is expected to be complete by early 2021.

GAO REPORTS:

Hanford Waste Treatment Plant: DOE Needs to Take Further Actions to Address Weaknesses in Its Quality Assurance Program

On April 24, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a [report](#) regarding Quality assurance problems at the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP) at the Hanford site in Washington State. The report found that DOE’s Office of River Protection (ORP) and the WTP contractor have implemented a Managed Improvement Plan intended to ensure that WTP can operate in compliance with DOE-approved safety and quality requirements, but that ORP officials will not be able to verify the extent of the plan implementation until December 2018.

The report also found that ORP has not ensured that all WTP quality assurance problems have been identified, and some DOE audits have found that previously identified quality assurance problems have recurred in key area.

Lastly, the report found that ORP’s organizational structure may not provide its Quality Assurance Division with sufficient independence from the office’s upper management to oversee the contractor’s quality assurance program effectively. By providing the Division adequate independence, DOE can better ensure that compliance with nuclear safety requirements will not be subordinated to other project management goals.



2018 Congressional Calendar



Both chambers in session
 Senate only in session

April

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
1 Easter Sunday	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Orthodox Easter	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

May

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 Mother's Day	14	15	16 Ramadan (begins)	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 Memorial Day	29 Vesak	30	31		

June

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Eid al-Fitr	16
17 Father's Day	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

July

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
1	2	3	4 Independence Day	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

August

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 Eid al-Adha	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

September

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
						1
2	3 Labor Day	4	5	6	7	8
9 Rosh Hashana (begins)	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 Yom Kippur (begins)	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

October

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
	1 FY '19 (begins)	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 Columbus Day	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

November

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
				1	2	3
4	5	6 Election Day	7 Diwali	8	9	10
11	12 Veterans' Day (observed)	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Thanksgiving Day	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

December

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
						1
2 Hanukkah (begins)	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29
30	31					



2018 Upcoming Events

June 13	U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board Summer 2018 Meeting , Idaho Falls, ID; visit here for details.
August 20-23	DOE Legacy Management 2018 Long-Term Stewardship Conference , Grand Junction, CO; visit here for details.
September 11	ECA Board of Directors Meeting , Alexandria, VA; contact meganc@energyca.org for details.
September 11-13	2018 National Cleanup Workshop , Alexandria, VA; see page 8 and visit www.cleanupworkshop.com for more information.
November 14-16	2018 Intergovernmental Meeting with DOE , New Orleans, LA; contact meganc@energyca.org for details.

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