

December 16, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA), I write to you regarding the importance and urgency of adequately funding the Department of Energy's Environmental Management (DOE-EM) program in Fiscal Year 2024.

ECA's members are the Justice40 communities and local governments adjacent to DOE activities. Our communities have a long history of hosting and supporting DOE missions, including the cleanup of the environmental legacy of the nation's Manhattan Project and Cold War nuclear weapons program as our communities are the most impacted by the contamination created by the programs.

As you may know, the EM program faces an environmental cleanup liability of hundreds of billions of dollars at 15 sites across the country.¹ In recent years, there have been numerous cleanup successes such as the construction of treatment and disposal facilities, and the deactivation and commissioning of facilities across the complex.

EM has identified several sites that still have extensive cleanup needs. For some sites, such as Hanford, Savannah River Site, and Idaho National Laboratory, remaining cleanup involves tank waste and spent nuclear fuel. At other sites, such as Portsmouth, Paducah, and Oak Ridge Reservation, large deactivation and decommissioning activities remain.² **The federal government has an obligation to these communities to make progress in cleaning up the contamination left behind at the sites, and meeting that obligation will require significantly more funding for the EM program.**

We are pleased to see that this Administration and Congress have increased appropriations for EM; however, even with such increases, DOE estimates that the total cost of EM work is nearly \$723 billion. Additionally, at the current pace, it is estimated that cleanup at several large sites will

¹ Government Accountability Office, "U.S. Government's Environmental Liability."

² Department of Energy Office Environmental Management. "EM Program Plan 2022."

take many more decades to complete. Hanford has a projected end date of 2078; Oak Ridge Reservation in 2047; and Savannah River Site in 2065 (Attachment A).³

Increased funding for the entire EM program is necessary beginning in FY24 to allow the Department to accelerate its work on critical projects that will reduce these projected end dates for cleanup and provide long-term cost savings for the program. Sufficient EM funding would also reiterate the Administration's commitment to environmental justice.

The frontline Justice40 communities, local governments, states, Tribes, and Pueblos have demonstrated decades of continued support for DOE missions. Your Administration and Congress must support increased funding for EM in FY24 to fulfill the obligation protect the human health and environment across the complex.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue impacting our nation, and we welcome the opportunity to have further discussions with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brent Gerry".

Mayor Brent Gerry
City of West Richland, WA
ECA Chair

cc: The Honorable Jennifer M. Granholm, Secretary of Energy
The Honorable Shalanda D. Young, Director of the Office of Management and Budget
Mr. William "Ike" White, Senior Advisor for Environmental Management

³ Ibid.

Attachment A

Table 6. EM Remaining Costs and End Dates by Site

	Estimated Cost (\$M)	Projected End Date
ETEC	341	2045
Hanford	311,676 – 505,391	2078 - 2091
ICP	7,747 – 10,979	2049 - 2060
LLNL	146 - 190	2031
LANL	5,770 – 6,836	2036
Moab	409 - 417	2029 - 2033
NNSS	487 - 610	2030
ORR	12,349 – 12,490	2047
Paducah	35,239 – 42,180	2065 – 2070
Portsmouth	11,498 – 13,486	2039 - 2043
SNL	27 - 29	2031
SRS	67,266 – 92,131	2065
SPRU	91	2025
WVDP	1,432 – 1,591	2043
WIPP	10,386 – 11,985	Supporting mission ^a
Federal Oversight and Program Support	23,638 – 24,580	2078 - 2091
Total^b	488,504 – 723,332	2078 - 2091

^a As a facility that supports the completion of EM work at other sites, the WIPP end date will be determined by the completion of cleanup at other sites, as well as the achievement of its capacity, as defined in the *WIPP Land Withdrawal Act of 1992*.

^b The total estimated cost range shown in this table includes costs estimated for fiscal year 2022 through completion of the EM cleanup mission, including approximately \$4M in FY22 to complete the cleanup at BNL.