Safety, Security, and Savings

Recommendations from communities across the US nuclear weapons complex to enhance safety and security while saving billions

ALLIANCE FOR NUCLEAR ACCOUNTABILITY
Nuclear Waste and Cleanup

• Priority One: Cleanup
• Whither the Waste?
• Forever WIPP?
• RECOMMENDATIONS
Nuclear Waste and Cleanup: Prioritize Cleanup

• 75 years of weapons production at 16 sites
• Threat to rivers, aquifers, community health
• Cost (est at $512 billion) grows with deferral
• Current funding levels ($7-8 billion) fail to meet legal obligations
Nuclear Waste and Cleanup: Prioritize Cleanup

• In FY 2021, nuclear weapons spending was increased by 25% while the President’s cleanup budget request was slashed by as much as 40% at some large sites. The final cleanup appropriation was actually increased. This shows the importance of lobbying!

• The end result? Millions spent to babysit dangerous waste sites instead of cleaning them up and getting them off the books. Expensive long-term obligations are wiped off the books, and the public and environment are spared the ongoing threat of waste leaking off-site.

• The cleanup we want is cleanup that removes and treats contamination—it’s a win/win.
Nuclear Waste and Cleanup: Cleanup Obligations

• Inadequate funding often results in DOE missing milestones in its cleanup agreements with states. This results in fines, agreement revisions, and increased risks from delayed cleanup.

• Recently, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) filed a complaint against DOE to terminate a 2016 Consent Order at Los Alamos National Lab for failing to make progress on cleanup of contamination. NMED stated that DOE’s cleanup plan for 2021 “was inadequate due to a lack of substantive and appropriate cleanup targets for coming years.”

• Congress should require DOE to request the funding necessary to meet its obligations. We deserve timely and protective cleanup.
Nuclear Waste Prioritize Cleanup - Asks

- Congress must invest in comprehensive cleanup that defines success by its isolation of chemical and radio-active hazards to protect future generations.

- DOE must rescind the 2019 high-level waste interpretation (relabeling).

- Congress must provide funding to effectively meet all legal agreements and require effective oversight of contractor performance.
Make Cleanup a Priority - Rescind HLW Reinterpretation

- High-Level Waste (HLW) is waste resulting from reprocessing spent nuclear fuel, permanent isolation is required by federal law.

- Hanford has 56 million gallons of high-level waste in 177 aging underground tanks.

- Hanford requirement for HLW is immobilization in glass and deep geological repository.

- DOE reinterpretation allows DOE to reclassify HLW on its own

- Issues: lack of oversight, increased risks

- Ask: Rescind the Department of Energy’s federal register notice reinterpretation of HLW
Consolidated Interim Storage Facilities

- Holtec International/Eddy Lea Energy Alliance, southeastern New Mexico, up to 173,600 metric tons

- Interim Storage Partners at Waste Control Specialists in Andrews County, West Texas, up to 40,000 metric tons

- NRC licensing nearly complete; federal court appeals underway; Congressional battles ahead
Yucca Mountain/Transport Risks

- Biden administration says Yucca is off the table
- Western Shoshone treaty rights; State of NV non-consent
- Road, rail, and waterway shipping risks through 44 states + D.C.
Hardened On-Site Storage (HOSS)

Statement of Principles for Safeguarding Nuclear Waste at Reactors, endorsed by 200+ groups, representing all 50 states

Expedited transfer from pools to dry casks to avert catastrophic fires

Dry cask storage, as close to point of origin as safely possible, requiring quality design/fabrication, to prevent accidents, deter attacks, forestall degradation
Nuclear Waste and Cleanup: Forever WIPP?

- Waste Isolation Pilot Plant – New Mexico
- Only deep geologic nuclear waste repository in the world
- 1992 Land Withdrawal Act
  - social, political, and legal contract
  - Department of Energy and New Mexicans
Nuclear Waste and Cleanup: Forever WIPP?

- 2014: Fire and radiation release incidents
- New plan: 61.5 metric tons of Plutonium
- Double size of underground disposal area
- 97% of commenters, and state of NM, oppose
- State permit: waste disposal ends in 2024
Nuclear Waste and Cleanup: Whither the Waste?

BAD IDEAS

• Yucca Mountain
• Consolidated “Interim” Storage
• Do nothing now

BETTER IDEAS

• Hardened On-Site Storage (HOSS)
• Public process to inform new legislation/solutions
Nuclear Waste and Cleanup

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Stop funding new WIPP shaft
• Fund cleanup now to meet legal obligations
• Rescind 2019 High-Level waste interpretation
• No funding for Consolidated Interim Storage or Yucca
• Store waste safely on site: Hardened On-Site Storage

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