

News from Around the Complex

June 16 – June 30, 2009

June 29, 2009

Fatal blow to GNEP?, *World Nuclear News*

The US Department of Energy is cancelling the wide-ranging environmental analysis of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) project. Its decision follows a change in government policy on commercial reprocessing. The proposed GNEP program, which was part of President George Bush's Advanced Energy Initiative, is intended to support a safe, secure and sustainable expansion of nuclear energy, both domestically and internationally. Domestically, the GNEP program would promote technologies that support economic, sustained production of nuclear-generated electricity, while reducing the impacts associated with used nuclear fuel disposal and reducing proliferation risks. As yet, DOE has no specific proposed actions for the international component of the GNEP program. Rather, the USA, through the GNEP program, is considering various initiatives to work cooperatively with other countries. So far, 25 countries have joined the GNEP partnership.

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/NP-DoE_cancels_GNEP_EIS-2906095.html

Federal Register notice for the GNEP cancellation (74 FR 31017-31018) is available here: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-15328.pdf>

June 26, 2009

K-25 cleanup ramps up: Truckloads of debris removed from historic site, *Knoxville News-Sentinel*

OAK RIDGE - Thousands of truckloads of debris have already been hauled from the site as demolition of the historic K-25 plant continues to pick up pace. Bechtel Jacobs Co., the Department of Energy's environmental contractor, is heading the massive demolition project and currently focusing efforts on the west wing of the mile-long, U-shaped building. Since demolition began in December, workers and their heavy equipment have knocked down 10 of the 27 units of the west wing, Bechtel Jacobs spokesman Dennis Hill said. The total length of the wing was 2,266 feet, of which 770 feet (or about 35 percent) has been demolished, he said. "We have shipped over 3,000 truckloads of debris" to the Department of Energy's landfill for contaminated cleanup wastes, Hill said.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2009/jun/26/cleanup-ramps-up/>

June 25, 2009

House rejects cutting \$1.2 billion from nuclear site cleanup, *The Miami Herald*

WASHINGTON — The House on Thursday turned down an amendment to the defense authorization bill that would have cut \$1.2 billion in funding for cleaning up such federal nuclear sites as Hanford to provide additional money for the nation's missile defense system. While the amendment was defeated, the bill already included cuts totaling \$471 million from the defense waste cleanup effort. The bulk of that money would, instead, be spent on keeping open the production line for the F-22 jet fighter. The amendment, offered on the floor by Republicans, was defeated 244-171 on a mostly party-line vote. The \$680 billion defense authorization bill was then approved 389-22. Overall, the bill authorizes slightly more than \$5 billion for defense environmental cleanup. The bill authorizes military spending on everything from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to major weapons and hardware to a 3.4 percent military pay raise. The Senate has yet to act on its version of the bill. After it does, the

money will have to be appropriated by the House and Senate appropriations committees.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/politics/AP/story/1114365.html>

June 24, 2009

Utah appeals ruling on Italian nuclear waste, *Deseret News*

State attorneys officially filed notice of their appeal of a federal court ruling which said EnergySolutions Inc. falls outside the regulatory purview of the Northwest Interstate Compact. The appeal of the May ruling had been anticipated for weeks, in light of U.S. District Judge Ted Stewart's decision that dealt a blow to the state and compact's efforts to block EnergySolutions' plan to import low-level radioactive waste from Italy. The waste, intended for disposal at the company's 439-acre facility in Tooele County's west desert, would occupy 4.3 acres of the total site and is no more "hot" than waste the site currently accepts, company officials have said. Still, vehement opposition by the state, watchdog groups and the compact led to the federal court battle that played out this year in a set of two separate rulings by Stewart, delivering victory to EnergySolutions on both fronts. First, in February, Stewart agreed with the company's contention that it is not considered a "regional disposal facility" envisioned by the U.S. government when it created regional compacts to exercise oversight of those type of sites.

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705312405/Appeal-on-Italian-N-waste-ruling.html>

June 24, 2009

Munger: DOE's cleanup stimulus could hurt 2010 funding, *Knoxville News-Sentinel*

The Department of Energy received a "boatload of money," as one Oak Ridge official so aptly put it earlier this year, from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Indeed, DOE's environmental management program received \$6 billion for cleanup projects across the country, and Oak Ridge got a sizable share - about \$755 million - of that windfall. That was great news, of course, for Oak Ridge and the East Tennessee economy. Those "shovel-ready" projects were supposed to create hundreds of new jobs, and some DOE contractors - such as nuclear-waste processor EnergyX - have already hired folks for good-paying jobs. From the outset, however, there were concerns that this one-time funding outlay might have a down side. Some observers feared it would mess up the annual funding for DOE's environmental cleanup program, which - especially in Oak Ridge - has frequently gotten the squeeze when budgets got tight.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2009/jun/24/does-cleanup-stimulus-could-hurt-2010-funding/>

June 23, 2009

DOE honors environmental initiative, *Augusta Chronicle*

The U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River National Laboratory and its Defense Waste Processing Facility were honored recently for an innovative environmental initiative that reduces waste volumes and eliminates the need for workers to enter a high-radiation area of the waste processing facility. The development and deployment of a new remote gasket removal and replacement tool earned the team an honorable mention in the annual White House Closing the Circle Awards, which recognize outstanding environmental stewardship at federal civilian and military facilities. This year, 15 winners and 13 honorable mentions were selected from nearly 200 nominations in the areas of environmental management systems, pollution prevention, recycling, green product purchasing, alternative fuels,

electronics stewardship and sustainable buildings. Savannah River Site is one of only two DOE facilities to be recognized in this year's awards.

http://chronicle.augusta.com/stories/latest/lat_530420.shtml

June 21, 2009

Trainloads of toxic sludge to begin arriving in Texas, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*

LUBBOCK — The first trainloads of PCB-tainted sludge dredged from the Hudson River will arrive this month and, in the eyes of critics, turn a stretch of West Texas into New York's "pay toilet." They say burying dirt so toxic that General Electric Co. will spend at least six years and an estimated \$750 million to dredge it up will create a new mess for future generations to clean up. But for the 15 jobs and bit of money it'll bring local businesses, the folks who live near the site are willing to take the risk, however remote, of tainting the area's groundwater with somebody else's trash. "The city is not against it, and the city is not in an uproar," said Matt White, mayor of nearby Eunice, N.M. "It is a big impact on our city and definitely positive...so we're very comfortable with it."

http://www.star-telegram.com/state_news/story/1445630.html

June 20, 2009

Field of secrets: The Santa Susana Field Lab cleanup saga hits 20, *Daily News (Los Angeles)*

BEFORE the spring of 1989, all most people knew of the Santa Susana Field Lab were the occasional rocket tests that sent a thundering boom across the Valley and shook the homes in West Hills, Chatsworth and Simi Valley, near the hilltop facility. The sprawling 2,859-acre lab built during the Cold War developed and tested rocket engines that powered missiles and, eventually, the Apollo and space shuttle missions.*** Over the last 20 years, regulators have begun to learn the extent of the contamination throughout the entire lab - left by decades of nuclear research, plus work developing and testing rockets for the Defense Department and NASA. And an extremely dedicated and savvy group of community activists have arisen to dog the cleanup and push legislators to require the safest cleanup standards. Yet for all that work, the cleanup is not expected to be complete until at least 2017. In real-bureaucratic time, that could end up being another two decades.

http://www.dailynews.com/opinions/ci_12655706

June 19, 2009

Energy Park Can Bring Thousands Of Jobs, *Portsmouth Daily Times*

PIKETON – When the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant shut down in 2001 after nearly 50 years of turning out weapons-grade uranium, the loss of 900 jobs was felt throughout the southern Ohio communities surrounding the plant. "It was a scary, depressing kind of feeling to lose that many jobs at one whack," said Portsmouth City Councilman Bob Mollette, who worked at the facility at the time. He wasn't one of those people who lost their job. He's been there now for 19 years and works as a shift foreman for USEC Inc. And now, with Thursday's announcement that four of the nation's biggest energy companies have formed an alliance to pursue the development of America's first clean energy park project at the place where the old gaseous diffusion plant operated, Mollette is certain the closing of the old plant was good for the area in the long run.

http://www.portsmouth-dailytimes.com/pages/full_story?page_label=results_content&id=2754244-Energy+Park+Can+Bring+Thousands+Of+Jobs&widget=push&article-Energy%20Park%20Can%20Bring%20Thousands%20Of%20Jobs%20=&open=&

June 19, 2009

Hastings leads efforts to push for more Yucca Mt. spending, *Tri-City Herald*

Congressman Doc Hastings led efforts to send a letter to Energy Secretary Steven Chu signed by a bipartisan group of 25 lawmakers asking that the Department of Energy continue the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository program. The letter highlights the ramifications of delays and urges proper funding for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission licensing review. Yucca Mountain was supposed to cap efforts that began in 1982 to build a deep repository for nuclear waste from the nation's nuclear power plants. It also was to take some of the high-level wastes from environmental cleanup of the Hanford reservation near Richland and several other DOE nuclear weapons production sites. However, President Obama's proposed budget included just \$197 million for the Yucca Mountain project. The budget also directed that the money be spent to "explore alternatives" to the Nevada project, and stipulated that no money would go for site access work, engineering or land purchases.

<http://www.hanfordnews.com/news/2009/story/13552.html>

Letter available here: <http://www.hastings.house.gov/media/pdfs/09-06-18%20-%20Yucca%20Letter%20to%20Chu.pdf>

June 17, 2009

Hanford sees progress on nuke treatment plant, *Tri-City Herald*

RICHLAND, Wash. Workers at the nation's most contaminated nuclear site are approaching a key turning point in building a massive waste treatment plant there, more than two years after the federal government shut down the project over seismic concerns. The vitrification plant at south-central Washington's Hanford nuclear reservation is among the largest industrial construction projects nationally, both in cost and sheer size. In recent years, the project has been mired in technical problems, delays and escalating costs, even as state and federal officials underscored its importance for ridding Hanford of radioactive waste. But workers expect to have completed 50 percent of the project by early fall, and just two of a long list of technical problems remain to be resolved.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/1154/story/617397.html>

June 16, 2009

Y-12's long-lost environmental impact statement, *Knoxville News-Sentinel Blog*

It's woefully behind schedule -- about four years, in fact -- and almost forgotten, but a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement for the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant may be published later this year. The big environmental document, known as the SWEIS, was under preparation years ago and reportedly nearing completion, but it got shunted aside and all but disappeared when a bigger project -- involving post-Cold War "transformation" of the entire U.S. nuclear weapons complex -- came on the scene. That, however, did not eliminate the legal obligations to do an environmental study of impacts at Y-12. Steven Wyatt, a spokesman for the National Nuclear Security Administration, said the Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement for Y-12 is still alive, still in preparation and "projected to be published around the end of September 2009."

http://blogs.knoxnews.com/knx/munger/2009/06/y-12s_long-lost_environmental.html