

News from Around the Complex

March 1 – March 15, 2010

Available on-line at www.fftfcleanup.org

March 29, 2010

SRS waste tank project takes step forward, *Augusta Chronicle*

A \$1.4 million Recovery Act-funded project to prepare one of Savannah River Site's radioactive waste tanks for permanent closure was completed this month. The modifications, which included repairing a ventilation system and replacing a pump on the 750,000-gallon tank, are part of a plan to close 22 of the site's remaining 49 tanks within eight years. Originally, there were 51 underground tanks at the site's H and F areas. Two were closed in the 1990s, and the remaining tanks still contain 36 million gallons of decaying waste left behind by decades of Cold War nuclear weapons production. John Lindsay, a spokesman for liquid waste contractor Savannah River Remediation, said six tanks are in some phase of closure activity.

<http://chronicle.augusta.com/news/metro/2010-03-29/srs-waste-tank-project-takes-step-forward?v=1269902527>

March 29, 2010

Congress, blue ribbon committee refuel Yucca Mountain debate: Congressional group introduces a resolution of disapproval slamming decision to block nuclear waste storage project, *Business Green*

As a committee assembled to discuss the future of nuclear waste disposal in the US, a bipartisan group of congressmen has obstructed the closure of a controversial project designed to tackle the problem. The Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, announced in January by energy secretary Steven Chu, convened late last week to discuss the future of the nuclear energy sector in the US following the Obama administration's closure of the Yucca Mountain project. *** On its first day, the Commission discussed the fate of the Yucca Mountain storage facility and the extent to which the absence of a permanent waste disposal plant could undermine the planned expansion of the US nuclear industry. The meeting came in the same week as a congressional group including Washington State Democrat representative Jay Inslee, introduced a resolution of disapproval opposing the move to close the project.

<http://www.businessgreen.com/business-green/news/2260368/congress-blue-ribbon-commitee>

March 28, 2010

Yucca Mountain out: Hanford nuke waste has nowhere to go, *The Seattle Times*

The tanks are still there, 177 in all, packed with 53 million gallons of radioactive waste. One million gallons have leached into the desert soil. A decade from now, this byproduct of the atomic age at Hanford nuclear reservation was to be turned into 14-foot-long glass rods, loaded in steel canisters and shipped to Nevada, where it could sit forever beneath a mountain. An additional 2,300 tons of spent nuclear fuel would go with it. But now the worst waste from the country's most polluted place has nowhere to go. The Obama administration's recent decision to withdraw licensing to build a high-level nuclear-waste repository at Yucca Mountain leaves future storage of the Manhattan Project's nastiest goop undecided. Some worry the move means waste could remain at Hanford indefinitely and that nuclear garbage from elsewhere might even join it.***"If Idaho has a legal agreement that the naval waste needs to leave and you don't have a repository somewhere, well, Hanford is right next door," said Andy Fitz, an assistant state attorney general. His office has asked the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to let the state intervene in the decision to withdraw Yucca's license, and may turn to other legal challenges if that fails.***Ken Niles, with Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality, agreed: "They always say Hanford has the infrastructure, the experience, the trained workers, and it's a desert."

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2011467984_yucca29m.html

March 27, 2010

NM environment head wants federal agency removed, *KOB News (New Mexico)*

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) - New Mexico's environmental secretary wants the National Nuclear Security Administration removed from environmental cleanup and surveillance programs at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Ron Curry says the National Nuclear Security Administration has had a "troubled history" in

implementing a 2005 consent decree over cleanup. He wrote Energy Secretary Steven Chu that the agency's involvement "has compromised the pace and direction" of work to protect the New Mexico's water resources and its citizens' health.

<http://www.kob.com/article/stories/S1487551.shtml?cat=504>

March 24, 2010

TN bill aims to keep 'radioactive dumping grounds' out of state, *The Tennessean*

A measure intended to block a "back-door" method of dumping radioactive waste in Tennessee is headed for a vote in the state Senate after a key committee approved the bill Tuesday. A Utah-based company, EnergySolutions, said it is requesting only to treat nuclear material at its Oak Ridge facility and then ship it out of state. But state Sen. Andy Berke, D-Chattanooga, who sponsored the bill, said banning the practice of "downblending" nuclear material — which involves diluting radioactive waste with less toxic materials — is the only way to avoid becoming "the world's radioactive dumping grounds." "This is about stopping this process that no one else does and has never been done commercially," Berke said. Berke worried that if Tennessee allows the practice, and then states such as Utah follow with their own bans, the Volunteer State would be stuck with the radioactive materials. No other state in the country allows the practice, according to Berke.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100324/NEWS02/3240369/1009/NEWS01>

March 24, 2010

Bipartisan Group of House Members Float Plan to Block Yucca Mountain Closure, *The New York Times*

A group of House Democrats and Republicans introduced a resolution yesterday to stop the Obama administration from ending the nuclear waste repository program at Yucca Mountain, Nev., and to save important project data. The resolution of disapproval aims to stop the Energy Department from using appropriated funds to end the project and to preserve "all scientific and site specific file and data related to Yucca Mountain," said a statement from Rep. Doc Hastings' (R-Wash.) office. Joining Hastings on the measure are Reps. Jay Inslee (D-Wash.), James Clyburn (D-S.C.), Norm Dicks (D-Wash.), John Spratt Jr. (D-S.C.), Fred Upton (R-Mich.) and Gresham Barrett (R-S.C.), all of whom represent districts and states that currently store spent commercial or defense nuclear waste.

<http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2010/03/24/24greenwire-bipartisan-group-of-house-members-float-plan-t-18379.html>

March 23, 2010

Secretary Chu Highlights Recovery Act Cleanup Progress, *DOE Press Release*

OAK RIDGE, TENN. – Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced today that the Department's Environmental Management program has spent more than \$1.5 billion in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds on cleanup projects around the country – 25 percent of the program's total - creating an estimated 14,400 jobs since the start of the Recovery Act. "Because of the Recovery Act, programs around the country have been able to expand, hire and continue our important cleanup work," said Secretary Chu. "These investments have played a key role in helping local economies recover, creating jobs and supporting small businesses in dozens of communities." Secretary Chu's announcement came during a visit to Oak Ridge National Laboratory, where he toured a range of Recovery Act projects and saw firsthand the progress that has been made possible as a result of these investments.

<http://www.energy.gov/news/8785.htm>

March 22, 2010

Nuclear power legislation melts down in Ky. House, *Business Week*

Legislation that would lift Kentucky's ban on construction of nuclear plants has melted down in the House after easily passing the Senate nearly two months ago.*** The bill, which cleared the Senate on a 27-10 vote in January, is backed by Republican lawmakers and Democratic Gov. Steve Beshear. But the sponsor, independent state Sen. Bob Leeper of Paducah, chairman of the Senate Appropriations and Revenue Committee, has been unable to garner support in the House. State law prohibits nuclear power plants from being built in Kentucky until the U.S. has a permanent storage facility to contain radioactive waste. A proposed high-level radioactive waste facility at Yucca Mountain in Nevada, about 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas, has been discussed since the early 1980s. Whether that proposed facility will ever open remains uncertain. Leeper said he wants Kentucky to be on "equal footing" with other states if the federal government ever approves the construction and operation of new nuclear plants. Leeper's district in

western Kentucky already is home to a uranium enrichment plant.
<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9EJSSP02.htm>

March 19, 2010

Hanford tank farm safety management criticized, *Tri-City Herald*

A federal oversight board has concerns about whether the safety management system used at Hanford's tank farms is adequate. The tank farm contractor's work planning directives "are unnecessarily complex and confusing," among other problems, said a letter sent by the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board to Ines Triay, the Department of Energy assistant secretary for environmental management. The safety board requested a report within 90 days outlining actions taken or planned by the DOE Hanford Office of River Protection and its tank farm contractor, Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS).

<http://www.hanfordnews.com/2010/03/19/14995/hanford-tank-farm-safety-management.html>

Letter available at: http://www.dnfsb.gov/pub_docs/staff_issue_reports/hanford/sir_20100312_hd.pdf

March 19, 2010

Lease proposed for clean energy park at Hanford, *Tri-City Herald*

Energy Northwest has asked the Department of Energy to lease about 20 square miles of Hanford nuclear reservation land for a proposed carbonless energy park. In addition to the options of using the park to produce solar and biofuel-based energy, small modular nuclear production also has been added to the proposed mix to supply the electrical and steam needs for the massive Hanford vitrification plant under construction. However, not all projects at the park would need to be tied to the vitrification plant, said Jack Baker, Energy Northwest vice president. Energy Northwest would hold the lease for the land in the proposed Mid-Columbia Energy Park, but the land would be available for public or private agencies, including Energy Northwest, to develop energy projects.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/03/19/944909/lease-proposed-for-clean-energy.html>

March 19, 2010

Extension of the Public Comment Period for the Draft Tank Closure and Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement for the Hanford Site, Richland, WA, *Federal Register Notice*

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is extending the public comment period for the Draft Tank Closure and Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement for the Hanford Site, Richland, Washington (Draft EIS, DOE/EIS-00391), made available for public comment on October 30, 2009 (74 FR 56194). The public comment period for the Draft EIS was to complete on March 19, 2010, and will be extended for 45 days. The new date for the close of the Public Comment period is now May 3, 2010. The extension is being made at the request of several reviewers.

<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/2010-6046.htm>

March 17, 2010

Regulators Urge Obama to Reconsider Yucca Mountain, *Wall Street Journal*

An organization of state utility regulators on Tuesday joined a number of states in challenging the Department of Energy's plan to drop a site at Yucca Mountain, Nev., from consideration as a repository for high-level radioactive waste. In a brief filed Tuesday with the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, a 120-year-old organization that represents state regulators, said utility ratepayers have paid \$17 billion into a federal waste fund, and that terminating the licensing process for Yucca Mountain would put the process of finding permanent storage "back to square one."

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703734504575125713008934470.html>

March 17, 2010

DOE Releases New Report on Benefits of Recovery Act for Small Businesses in Clean Energy, Environmental Management Sectors, *DOE Press Release*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Energy today released a new report highlighting the benefits of the Recovery Act to small businesses throughout the clean, renewable energy industry and environmental management sector. The report found that as of early March 2010, small businesses have been selected to receive nearly \$5.4 billion in funding across a number of Recovery Act and related programs, including loans, loan guarantees, grants, contracts and tax incentives, in partnership with the Department of Treasury. The report highlights 26 small businesses in a range of clean energy technologies, such as wind, solar, biofuels, along with critical new infrastructure, like Smart Grid, advanced batteries, energy storage,

and energy efficiency tools. It also notes small businesses that are helping advance responsible environmental clean-up efforts.

<http://www.energy.gov/news/8768.htm>

March 11, 2010

Sierra Club hoping for tight landfill controls, *The State (South Carolina)*

The South Carolina Court of Appeals sided with conservationists Wednesday in their fight against a 39-year-old nuclear waste dump that has buried atomic garbage in open trenches and leaked radioactive pollutants into groundwater. After six years of legal skirmishes about the landfill, the appeals court agreed to keep alive the state Sierra Club's case for tougher disposal controls at the Barnwell County dump. The ruling sends the case back to a lower court for a decision on whether to issue a permit for the landfill. The state Administrative Law Court must answer legitimate legal questions raised by the Sierra Club about Chem-Nuclear's burial of atomic refuse, the appeals court said. It could be months before a decision is rendered.

<http://www.thestate.com/2010/03/11/1195949/sierra-club-hoping-for-tight-landfill.html>

March 10, 2010

LANL awards \$100M waste-disposal contract, *New Mexico Business Weekly*

Los Alamos National Laboratory awarded a \$100 million contract to TerranearPMC LLC to haul and dispose of waste produced by stimulus-funded cleanup work. LANL received federal money through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to demolish and remove Cold War-era buildings in Technical Area 21. The lab awarded \$100 million to four small companies last year to demolish the infrastructure and remove equipment. Project officials estimate cleanup operations will generate about 50,000 cubic yards of rubble from demolished buildings and excavated soil. That's enough to fill a football field to a depth of about 25 feet.

<http://albuquerque.bizjournals.com/albuquerque/stories/2010/03/08/daily27.html>

March 4, 2010

Uranium tailings cleanup reaches million-ton milestone, *Salt Lake Tribune*

The U.S. Energy Department said this week that more than 1 million tons of uranium mill tailings have been moved from the banks of the Colorado River near Moab to a disposal cell 30 miles away at Crescent Junction, north of Interstate 70. The work is part of a \$1 billion cleanup of the old Atlas Corp. uranium mill across Highway 191 from the entrance to Arches National Park.

http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_14516271

See Related NFAC Article (January 14, 2010 Deseret News):

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705358287/Moab-tailings-removal-hits-milestone-136-containers-shipped.html>

March 4, 2010

Funds for legacy waste facility, *World Nuclear News*

The government of Canada has awarded C\$20 million (\$19.4 million) for the design and construction oversight for a long-term facility to manage historic low-level radioactive waste at Port Hope in Ontario. The contract, awarded to a joint venture of MMM Group Limited/Conestoga-Rovers and Associates Limited of Thornhill, Ontario, comes under the auspices of the Port Hope Area Initiative (PHAI), a federally-sponsored project which aims to remediate wastes from earliest days of the nuclear age. Announcing the contract on behalf of Government Services Canada and Natural Resources Canada, Member of Parliament Rick Norlock described it as an important step forward. "Our goal is the cleanup and safe long-term management of historic low-level radioactive waste in the Port Hope area," he said.

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/WR-Canadian_government_funds_for_legacy_waste_facility-0403107.html

March 4, 2010

NRC Finishes Review Of DOE's Phase 1 Decommissioning Plan For West Valley Demonstration Project, *Nuclear Street Blog*

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has concluded its technical review of the Department of Energy's Phase 1 decommissioning plan for the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) in western New York state. The NRC did not identify any objections and concluded that the plan will satisfy the decommissioning criteria for unrestricted use spelled out in NRC regulations. The West Valley site is located on 3,300 acres of land known as the Western New York Nuclear Service Center. The WVDP site,

which is a 200-acre portion of the center, contains a former commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing facility that operated from 1966 to 1972, and produced approximately 600,000 gallons of liquid high-level radioactive waste. The WVDP also contains contaminated structures and a radioactive waste disposal area. The site also has a waste tank farm, waste lagoons, and above-ground radioactive waste storage areas, with soil and groundwater contamination near these facilities.

http://nuclearstreet.com/blogs/nuclear_power_news/archive/2010/03/04/NRC-Finishes-Review-Of-DOE_1920_s-Phase-1-Decommissioning-Plan-For-West-Valley-Demonstration-Project-03045.aspx

March 3, 2010

Statement by Congressman Doc Hastings on President Obama's Action to Permanently Abandon Yucca Mountain, *Office of Congressman Doc Hastings*

"As recently as February 16th, President Obama signaled a 'commitment to jumpstarting the nation's nuclear power industry.' Not only does today's action by the Administration fly in the face of this commitment, it also means that high-level defense nuclear waste at Hanford will remain in our state longer. While Congress may be limited by the Administration's decision to reprogram \$115 million and put it towards termination of Yucca Mountain, I am committed to pursuing any and all legislative options that will ensure that Yucca mountain remains viable and is not sacrificed for election year politics. Washington is home to more of the federal government's defense nuclear waste than any other state and that waste is slated to be shipped out of our state to Yucca Mountain for permanent storage. Here at Hanford, the Waste Treatment Plant and the glass it will produce have been designed to meet standards that are specific to the Yucca Mountain repository."

<http://www.hastings.house.gov/Read.aspx?ID=1357>

March 3, 2010

Report: Keep depleted uranium out of Utah: Paperwork shows South Carolina waste violates Utah's radiation limits, *Salt Lake Tribune*

Depleted uranium from a government cleanup in South Carolina is too radioactive and contains fission waste that should not be buried in Utah, says a new report from technical experts working with the Healthy Environment Alliance of Utah. Consulted by Gov. Gary Herbert before his meeting last week with the U.S. Energy Department (DOE), the report says a close look at the federal agency's own paperwork shows that the DU from the Savannah River Site doesn't meet state or federal hazard standards for disposal in EnergySolutions Inc.'s Tooele County landfill. Arjun Makhijani and Harry Chmelynski estimate that between 680 and 5,600 drums of the total 33,000-drum inventory from Savannah River contain more of the fission product technetium-99 than Utah law allows.

http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_14503021

See Related NFAC Article (February 25, 2010 Salt Lake Tribune):

http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_14469538

March 3, 2010

Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future to Hold First Meeting, *DOE Press Release*

Washington, D.C. - On Thursday, March 25th and Friday, March 26th, the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, co-chaired by former Congressman Lee Hamilton and former National Security Advisor General Brent Scowcroft, will hold its first meeting in Washington, D.C. At the direction of President Obama, Secretary of Energy Steven Chu established the Blue Ribbon Commission to conduct a comprehensive review of policies for managing the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle and to provide recommendations for developing a safe, long-term solution to managing the Nation's used nuclear fuel and nuclear waste.

<http://www.energy.gov/news/8702.htm>

March 1, 2010

HANFORD: Washington State joins Yucca Mountain battle, *Tri-City Herald*

The state of Washington gave legal notice Monday that it plans to enter the fray to prevent the Department of Energy from terminating plans to make Yucca Mountain, Nev., a nuclear waste repository. That legal notice will be followed Wednesday with a petition to become a party in licensing proceedings before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, said Andy Fitz, Washington state assistant attorney general. The Department of Energy is expected this week to file a motion to withdraw its license application for Yucca Mountain filed last year with the NRC. DOE wants it withdrawn "with prejudice," which would prevent it from being re-filed.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/03/01/922108/hanford-washington-state-joins.html>