

News from Around the Complex

June 1 – June 30, 2010

June 29, 2010

US DOE Blocked From Withdrawing Yucca Nuclear-Waste Bid, *Wall Street Journal*

WASHINGTON - A Nuclear Regulatory Commission panel on Tuesday denied a request by the Obama administration to withdraw an application for a national nuclear-waste repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada. A three-judge NRC panel said the U.S. Energy Secretary doesn't have the power to withdraw the application because a 1982 law "does not give the secretary the discretion to substitute his policy for the one established by Congress." An Energy Department spokeswoman didn't immediately return a phone call. The decision sets up a challenge to President Barack Obama's administration and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D., Nev.), a longtime opponent of putting the nuclear-waste site in his state. Republicans, allies of the nuclear-power industry, cheered the decision, even as they acknowledged the difficulty of reviving the project in the face of opposition from Reid and Obama.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20100629-710628.html>

June 29, 2010

Texas reworking plan for radioactive waste shipments, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*

A plan to potentially let 36 states ship radioactive waste to West Texas -- loads that likely would pass through North Texas on major highways and railroads -- is being revamped by state officials. This month, members of the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact Commission took down proposed rules that could have allowed dozens of states to send low-level waste to a site in Andrews County. Environmentalists and state lawmakers were among those expressing concerns about leakage, contamination and the safety of communities along shipping routes. "The rules were withdrawn," said Margaret Henderson, interim executive director of the commission. "There had been a number of public comments. [Commissioners] will be going through them and considering" what to include in a new version of proposed rules, she said.

<http://www.star-telegram.com/2010/06/28/2299720/texas-reworking-plan-for-radioactive.html#ixzz0sHD7mnMw>

See NFAC Article Below (June 25 Dallas Morning News)

See Previous NFAC Article (June 15 Dallas Morning News):

http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/texasouthwest/stories/DN-radioactive_15tex.ART.State.Edition1.2993c06.html

June 28, 2010

Federal nuclear chief addresses Utah issues, *Salt Lake Tribune*

SALT LAKE CITY — If you start out with one teapot and a bag of Earl Grey blend, no matter how long you let the bag steep, you still end up with tea. That analogy, offered by the chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, was touched on with reporters Monday while Gregory Jaczko was in Salt Lake City for a meeting of the Health Physics Society. Processed low-level radioactive waste or so-called "blended waste" — if it remains Class A material — "it is Class A material," Jaczko said. EnergySolutions' efforts to store the processed waste at its Clive facility have been met with criticism from some environmental advocacy groups and elicited a public policy statement of opposition to the practice by state regulators and Gov. Gary Herbert. The board, however, was careful to note that it recognized down-blended waste does not pose any unique health and safety issues, but emphasized it was opposed if the intent of blending is to alter the waste's classification.

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700043868/Federal-nuclear-chief-addresses-Utah-issues.html>

Full Text of Gregory Jaczko's remarks available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/commission/speeches/2010/s-10-020.html>

June 27, 2010

Hanford waste retrieval resumes with better technology, *Tri-City Herald*

Hanford workers have resumed digging up temporarily buried transuranic waste in central Hanford with improved technology that should take some of the surprises out of the work. Retrieval of the transuranic waste -- typically debris contaminated with plutonium -- was stopped in February by CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. when it ran into problems. Since then the Department of Energy contractor has been working on improvements to its processes. In 1970 Congress ordered transuranic waste sent to a national

repository. But until the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico opened, Hanford workers have been storing waste suspected of being transuranic, often by temporarily burying it. Much of the waste that Hanford workers have dug up so far to ship to New Mexico was buried in tidy rows and information about what's underground has been available.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/06/27/1071333/hanford-waste-retrieval-resumes.html#ixzz0sA3dbTSR>

June 25, 2010

Problems persist for West Texas nuclear waste, *Dallas Morning News*

LUBBOCK, Texas – A troubled site for disposing some of the nation's low-level radioactive waste has two more problems to deal with. Officials with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality said the agency will issue a Notice of Violation within two weeks because the company that operates the site has stored a concrete canister filled with the hottest low-level radioactivity material beyond the 365 days allowed under a waste processing license. The commission is drafting what it will require of Waste Control Specialists to deal with the violation, but because of "potential issues related to repackaging and transportation, the TCEQ will allow the waste to remain on site as long as WCS complies with TCEQ's corrective action requirements," agency spokeswoman Andrea Morrow wrote in an e-mail.

<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/texasouthwest/stories/062610dntexnukewaste.4ebfa57.html>

June 23, 2010

Possible deadlines at odds with repository, *Tri-City Herald*

Proposed new legal deadlines for treating or shipping Hanford's transuranic waste could extend work past the date a national repository is projected to be open to accept the waste. Proposed Tri-Party Agreement deadlines would allow the Department of Energy to continue treating or shipping transuranic wastes -- typically debris contaminated with plutonium -- through 2035. No previous deadline had been set for shipping the waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico, the nation's repository for transuranic waste. But current projections anticipate WIPP will stop accepting waste in late 2030 and work then would begin to close the repository.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/06/23/1065416/possible-deadlines-at-odds-with.html#ixzz0sA2zdGjO>

June 22, 2010

Hanford barrier plan better block vs. waste in river, *Tri-City Herald*

HANFORD -- The Department of Energy is proposing extending a chemical barrier along the Columbia River at Hanford after a pilot project successfully trapped radioactive strontium before it entered the river. At the same time, a system to pump contaminated water out of the ground and treat it, which had disappointing results, would be torn out. DOE has been testing the chemical barrier technology since 2005, with the most recent results showing a 90 percent reduction in strontium contamination in ground water, according to DOE. The test area extends 300 feet along the Columbia near Hanford's N Reactor, but DOE is proposing extending the chemical barrier to 2,500 feet to span the width of the area where strontium exceeds drinking water standards in ground water near the river.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/06/22/1064081/hanford-barrier-plan-better-block.html#ixzz0sA2mP9uf>

June 21, 2010

DOE's Recovery Act wish list, *Knoxville News-Sentinel Blog*

DOE Manager Gerald Boyd recently said that the Oak Ridge office had submitted a number of Environmental Management (EM) projects to agency headquarters in Washington for possible funding with Recovery Act money. Boyd indicated that several stimulus projects in Oak Ridge were being accomplished with less money than originally projected and that those savings might be applied to new Oak Ridge projects, if approved as required in some instances, or projects that might be carried out if more Recovery Act funds become available.

http://blogs.knoxnews.com/munger/2010/06/does_recovery_act_wish_list.html

June 21, 2010

New name and mission for GNEP, *World Nuclear News*

The Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) is to change its name to the International Framework for Nuclear Energy Cooperation (IFNEC) and establish a new mission statement as it aims to broaden its scope to wider international participation. The change in title was approved by GNEP's steering group at a

meeting in Accra, Ghana on 16-17 June, "to reflect global developments that have occurred since the partnership was established in 2007," according to the US Department of Energy (DOE).
See also: DOE Press Release on GNEP (June 18): <http://www.energy.gov/news/9157.htm>

June 18, 2010

Piketon residents updated on accelerated cleanup efforts, *Chillicothe Gazette (Ohio)*

Accelerated clean-up work at the Department of Energy's Piketon site is moving along well, officials said, following a \$118.2 million infusion in federal stimulus money designed to speed up the process of decontamination and decommissioning, environmental remediation and waste management of the former Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant. The removal of contaminated groundwater from a plume on the east side of the plant is moving along better than planned, DOE Project Manager Bill Murphie said at a public open house Thursday evening. "We've seen a cost savings there, and because of that, we've been able to do more groundwater removal than we initially thought with the (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) money," Murphie said.

<http://www.chillicothe Gazette.com/article/20100618/NEWS01/6180305>

June 16, 2010

Senate, House discuss energy park at SRS, *Aiken Standard*

Both the U.S. Senate and House are discussing the implementation of the energy parks initiative at Savannah River Site and similar federal property, according to the Department of Energy. Speaking Tuesday at an industry advocacy group breakfast, Karen Guevara with the Department of Energy said that the Under Secretary of Energy, [Inés] Triay, has been asked to "mobilize a task force" to look into using weapons complex sites as home for future sites of domestic energy production.

Guevara was speaking at the Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness' (CNTA) "Up and Atom" breakfast where she and the head of the Site's two main contractors spoke of the work they were doing as a result of the \$1.6 billion injection of American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funds.

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/Local/0616CNTAARRA>

June 15, 2010

Panel to revise rules on proposed nuclear waste disposal site, *Dallas Morning News*

LUBBOCK – A commission overseeing low-level radioactive waste disposal in Texas has withdrawn and will revise proposed rules that could allow 36 other states to send nuclear waste for burial near the New Mexico line. Bob Gregory of the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact Commission said Monday that the panel voted unanimously Saturday to pull the proposed rules as initially published and repost them with some amendments and revisions.

http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/texasouthwest/stories/DN-radioactive_15tex.ART.State.Edition1.2993c06.html

June 13, 2010

Once notorious uranium waste site in Fernald, Ohio, beckons tourists, *Detroit Free Press*

FERNALD, Ohio -- At first, the Fernald Preserve inspires jokes. "Let's come back and go hiking -- in 500 years," I say, checking out trails marked with radiation monitors. My mom and stepdad make cracks about fish with three eyes and birds with six wings, ha ha. Still, we're a little nervous. Fernald Preserve used to be the site of the factory where uranium was processed for nuclear bombs. From 1951 to 1989, it was known as the Fernald Feed Materials Production Center, a secretive facility in the middle of farm country in southwest Ohio. It produced nearly 70% of all uranium used in America's nuclear weapons. After it closed, cleaning up the badly contaminated site took the U.S. Department of Energy \$4.4 billion and 17 years. But in 2008, incredibly, it reopened as a nature preserve. With 7 miles of hiking trails and a handsome visitors center, it has attracted more than 17,000 tourists so far.

<http://www.freep.com/article/20100613/FEATURES07/6130319/1322/Once-notorious-uranium-waste-site-in-Fernald-Ohio-beckons-tourists>

June 11, 2010

Nuclear cocktail: Don't blend radioactive wastes, *Salt Lake Tribune*

[Editorial] If you combine hamburger and soy beans and call it a vegetable burger, you're doing vegetarians a disservice. The meat is still part of the patty. Likewise, if the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission allows the nuclear industry to blend assorted low-level radioactive wastes to achieve a mix that unfairly qualifies for disposal in the Beehive State, Utahns will be done a disservice. Like meat in a fake vegeburger, the hotter wastes that we prohibit would still be a part of the mix. State regulators and

elected leaders have made it crystal clear through statute, rules and speech that Utah is only willing to accept Class A waste, the most benign category. The NRC should honor that wish instead of trying to foist hotter Class B and C wastes on the state through blending. But that's the effort afoot, as the NRC contemplates a policy change that would benefit the nuclear power industry and Salt Lake City-based EnergySolutions -- at Utah's expense.

http://www.sltrib.com/D=g/ci_15280641

See Related NFAC Article Below: June 9, Salt Lake Tribune

June 10, 2010

U Canyon buildings at Hanford coming down, *Tri-City Herald*

After months of preparation at Hanford's first huge processing canyon to be demolished, Hanford workers have gotten to some of the "fun part." That's what Mike Swartz, deputy project manager for deactivation and demolition at CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co., called the work of the shears mounted on an excavator that were tearing away at the walls of a U Plant processing building Wednesday. "This is the skyline-changing stuff," said Cathy Louie, Department of Energy deputy project director. "It's been out here from the '40s." U Plant is one of five processing plants at the Hanford nuclear reservation built to chemically separate plutonium from fuel rods irradiated in Hanford reactors for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/06/10/1048225/u-canyon-buildings-at-hanford.html#ixzzOqT4fDXIK>

June 9, 2010

Radioactive blending could send waste to Utah, *The Salt Lake Tribune*

Utah, say federal regulators, can help solve a big problem for the nuclear industry: the pileup of low-level radioactive waste at many of the nation's reactors. Much of the hottest low-level waste -- though far less radioactive than used fuel rods -- is stored at 90 power plants because nuclear companies have nowhere to dispose of it. So, staff at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed changing federal rules to make that waste permissible at the EnergySolutions Inc. disposal site in Utah through "blending." By allowing more hazardous "Class B and C waste" to be mixed with lower-hazard "Class A" waste, regulators would make the blend legal for disposal at EnergySolutions, the only commercial site open to low-level radioactive waste from 36 states.

http://www.sltrib.com/D=g/ci_15263647

NRC website on Blending of Low-Level Radioactive Waste: <http://www.nrc.gov/waste/llw-disposal/llw-pa/llw-blending.html>

NRC staff analysis of issues associated with the blending, April 7, 2010:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/commission/secys/2010/secy2010-0043/2010-0043scy.html>

June 9, 2010

Senators call for full funding of Piketon cleanup, *Chillicothe Gazette*

A week after EnergySolutions Inc. marked the beginning of the DUF6 Conversion Facility operations at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Piketon, Ohio's two U.S. senators have issued a call for full site cleanup funding. U.S. Sens. George Voinovich and Sherrod Brown said Tuesday they have written to Senate leadership asking that decommissioning and decontamination work at the Department of Energy site receive full funding in the FY 2011 Energy and Water Development appropriations bill. "Full funding will accelerate work that is long overdue while driving critical economic development in the Scioto Valley," Brown said. "Piketon and the surrounding region have been neglected too long. These funds will go a long way toward ensuring clean water, clean air and clean land while also creating jobs." The letter was sent to Sens. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., and Bob Bennett, R-Wyo., the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations Energy and Water Development Subcommittee.

<http://www.chillicothe Gazette.com/article/20100609/NEWS01/6090308>

See Related NFAC Article Below: June 6, Chillicothe Gazette

June 9, 2010

Plume control methods working, *Knoxville News-Sentinel*

OAK RIDGE - An underground plume of chemical pollution leaving the east end of the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant was discovered years ago, and there have been a series of responses to control it, apparently with some success. The government and its contractors have used a "pump-and-treat" system at the Oak Ridge plant to deal with the groundwater contamination at the site and keep it away from the nearby Union Valley Industrial Park. "The monitoring wells indicate the plume is not moving further east,"

said John Owsley, the state's environmental oversight chief in Oak Ridge. "It hasn't eliminated the plume, but it has prevented the further migration," Owsley said, citing statistics from the latest report from the Department of Energy on cleanup effectiveness. "They have found this remedy to be effective in reducing the concentration of the (pollution) in the plume." Owsley said the groundwater is contaminated with "chlorinated volatile organic compounds" from spills and discharges at Y-12. Earlier reports identified the primary pollutant as carbon tetrachloride, which was associated with past Y-12 operations.
<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/jun/09/plume-control-methods-working/>

June 7, 2010

Water Source Discovered for Desert Oasis Near Death Valley, *Live Science*

About 10,000 gallons of water per minute gush up from the desert floor at an oasis near Death Valley, Nevada, but only after the water completes a slow 15,000-year underground journey, a new study suggests. Until now, scientists were puzzled over the source of water for the oasis called Ash Meadows in Nevada. The new research suggests the water flows from the north to the south through an underground crack in the Earth's crust known as the Gravity Fault, which acts as a guide for the water. That conduit connects the Nevada Test Site with Ash Meadows, which is located about 90 miles (145 kilometers) northwest of Las Vegas.

<http://www.livescience.com/environment/water-source-discovered-mysterious-oasis-100604.html>

June 7, 2010

Talks under way on future of radioactive waste site, *Salt Lake Tribune*

The EnergySolutions radioactive waste site might one day be added to the real estate portfolio of the American taxpayer. At least that's the drift of negotiations under way between the U.S. Energy Department and the Salt Lake City nuclear services company, which operates the nation's busiest low-level radioactive waste site, about 75 miles west of Salt Lake City. And while state regulators and the environmental group Healthy Environment Alliance of Utah support the move, both DOE and the company say the talks are very preliminary. "It is premature to comment on whether [the discussion] has progressed from that," said EnergySolutions spokesman Mark Walker, "or if it will progress from this point."

http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_15242783

June 6, 2010

Conversion facility opens at Piketon, *Chillicothe Gazette*

PIKETON -- EnergySolutions Inc., the managing partner for Uranium Disposition Services (UDS), marked the commencement of the initial operation of the DUF6 Conversion Facility at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant last week. EnergySolutions, working closely with the U.S. Department of Energy, took control of the project in 2007 to manage the operational reviews and construction, completing the project within budget and ahead of schedule. Working closely with AREVA NP Inc. and Burns and Roe Enterprises, the work involved managing the operational reviews and construction. The facilities will be used to convert DOE inventory of depleted uranium hexafluoride (DUF6) into a stable form for beneficial use, re-use and/or disposal.

<http://www.chillicothe Gazette.com/article/20100606/NEWS01/6060313>

June 6, 2010

Pumping of Hanford tank waste halted, *Tri-City Herald*

Work has halted to empty the only Hanford tank on which work has been under way to retrieve radioactive waste, but the Department of Energy and its contractor have ambitious plans for the remainder of the year. "Washington River Protection Solutions is going to be working very hard this summer to pull this off," said Steve Pfaff, DOE project director for tank waste retrieval. Work started in January to remove 260,000 gallons of solids from Tank C-104, one of 142 leak-prone single-shell tanks at Hanford that still hold radioactive waste from the production of plutonium during World War II and the Cold War. But this spring the pump lowered into the tank to help remove waste hit an obstruction hidden in the sludge. It was a broken piece of an old pump that Washington River Protection Solutions had removed from the tank to make way for the pump used for waste retrieval.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/06/06/1042982/pumping-of-hanford-tank-waste.html#ixzz0qHLIXMLZ>

June 4, 2010

Moab tailings removal continues, *Deseret News*

MOAB — A June update by the U.S. Department of Energy said that 1.5 million tons of uranium mill tailings have been removed from near the banks of the Colorado River and buried in a disposal site 30 miles away. Federal stimulus funding of \$108 million has accelerated the cleanup, which will tackle an additional 1.2 million tons of tailings between now and September 2011. Rep. Jim Matheson, D-Utah, said in a Friday press release that he's encouraged by the progress made so far in the remediation project. Matheson pushed to fast-track the project and said federal recovery money is helping to accomplish a 2019 cleanup deadline.

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700037722/Moab-tailings-removal-continues.html>

See Related NFAC Item: DOE IG Report, Audit of Moab Mill Tailings Cleanup Project, April 23, 2010: <http://www.ig.energy.gov/images/OAS-RA-L-10-03.pdf>

June 4, 2010

Some Hanford work ahead of schedule, DOE official says, *Tri-City Herald*

Federal economic stimulus money could go further than expected at Hanford, but it's early to start planning additional projects that might be tackled at the nuclear reservation, said Ines Triay, Department of Energy assistant secretary for environmental management. She met with the Hanford Advisory Board in Richland on Thursday morning, taking questions on Hanford and hearing comments on what board members want considered as a new manager for the DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office is picked. Hanford received \$1.96 billion in federal economic stimulus money for environmental cleanup at Hanford through September 2011.

Some projects are ahead of schedule and DOE has not encountered some risks that were anticipated, said Doug Shoop, deputy manager of the Richland Operations Office. Work includes tearing down contaminated buildings, expanding the landfill for low-level radioactive waste, digging up waste sites, drilling wells to help clean up ground water and removing glove boxes from the Plutonium Finishing Plant.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/06/04/1040127/some-hanford-work-ahead-of-schedule.html#ixzz0qHLJk9UM>

June 4, 2010

Search for Canadian nuclear waste site, *World Nuclear News*

Canada has begun a process to select a permanent storage site for its high-level radioactive wastes. As determined by federal government in 2007, the plan is to dispose of used nuclear fuel from the country's nuclear power plants in a deep geological repository. This is to be located in an "informed and willing community" and the search for this has now begun. The body responsible for the job is the Nuclear Waste Management Organisation (NWMO), which began a nationwide dialogue on the topic of long-term waste management last year with the aim of including people's input in the design of the siting process. Key to this 'Adaptive Phase Management' process is that communities are in constant conversation with the NWMO and can withdraw from the process at any time. With most of Canada geologically suitable for underground waste storage, the most important thing for NWMO is to build confidence that the program is being carried out fairly and the end result will be safe.

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/WR_Search_for_Canadian_nuclear_waste_site_0406101.html