

PDGP workers worried about expiring cleanup funding



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PADUCAH -- Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant workers and local leaders are worried because cleanup funding is set to expire.

January 15th marks the end of a continuing resolution, which temporarily funded so called 'Decontamination and Decommissioning'.

If Congress can't agree on a 2014 budget or pass another continuing resolution, all of the 360 workers could lose their jobs.

"We want to put these people to work productively and the G.E. Hitachi deal will not come to fruition probably for another year or two," PGDP Citizen's Advisory Board member Ralph Young said.

He also told us he is worried the workers will have to move on despite the fact that G.E. has expressed interest in the plant.

PGDP cleanup concerns; funding ends in January



Reporter - Jason Hibbs

Photojournalist - Justin Jones

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PADUCAH, Ky.---101 P.G.D.P. cleanup workers will lose their jobs on the day after Christmas and many worry more layoffs will follow as funding for decontamination and decommissioning expires.

Earlier in the week, we had the news of G.E. Hitachi's interest in the plant but cleanup is not connected to the G.E. Hitachi announcement.

The cleanup workers are subcontractors and the work is funded with taxpayer dollars.

A P.G.D.P. Citizens Advisory Board member told Local 6 cleanup crews were working with money provided by a continuing resolution, which was a temporary mechanism that expires on January 15th.

No one is sure what happens after that. As decades of Gaseous Diffusion comes to an end, a major decontamination and decommissioning project must begin.

"Once the plant gets turned over we can go in and tear anything down that needs to be torn down," Vice Chair Of the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant Citizen's Advisory Board says 'D & D' will take until the year 2040. He's worried the funding won't last after January because congress can't agree on a budget.

"It's just kind of this agonizing ritual that the government goes through and this is really the fall out where the rubber meets the road," Board member Ralph Young said.

With 101 D & D workers already facing layoffs in December, union vice president Jim Key worries those workers will not stick around.

"Some of them I'm sure will seek employment opportunities elsewhere. By the time sufficient funding may be provided down the road, you have the additional cost of retraining new workers to perform the work occurring at the site today," Key said.

Ralph Young with the Citizens Advisory Board says D & D funding totals about 140 million dollars each year. The 2014 budget allocated an additional 180 million dollars.

In addition to the 101 contracted cleanup layoffs on December 26th, 40 U.S.E.C. employees are expected to lose their jobs between January 21st and 31st.