

# ECA Update: September 30, 2013



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## **Shutdown Looks Likely As Congress Hits Final Hours**

Michael Catalini and Billy House, National Journal

September 29, 2013

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With just hours to go until a government shutdown, Senate Democrats are promising to torpedo the House's latest legislative volley, Republicans are formulating last-minute plans to score a victory against Obamacare, and both sides are digging political entrenchments that make shuttering the government increasingly likely.

With the Senate set to act next, and the House readying a response, the two chambers are engaged in a game of political hot potato, with both trying not to be considering the last version of a continuing resolution when the deadline hits.

But with a partial shutdown--the first since 1996--slated for midnight, many are pessimistic. Asked on CBS's Face the Nation if he thinks a shutdown will occur, the Senate's No. 2 Democrat, Dick Durbin of Illinois, said, "I'm afraid I do."

"The House position, which is basically the same one they sent us the last time, is going to be rejected again," Durbin said. "And we are going to face the prospect of the government shutting down."

What happens next, according to Senate Democratic aides, is that the Senate will take up the continuing resolution passed by the House early Sunday morning, but will strip out what Democratic leaders view as toxic provisions that would affect the Affordable Care Act.

The House's bill delays the implementation of Obamacare for a year and repeals a medical-device tax that funds portions of the ACA. A separate resolution passed by the House calls for paying the military in the event of a shutdown.

House Republicans are hoping that Democratic senators from conservative states will join with those who oppose the medical-device tax to pressure Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., for a vote on those provisions.

But Reid's next move is anything but a mystery. Saying that the House's action Sunday was "pointless," Reid intends to strip the controversial provisions (whether the Senate will vote on the military funding is still unclear) with a motion to table, which requires a simple majority, according to a Senate Democratic leadership aide. Reid will then send the same bill that passed the chamber on Friday back to the House, the aide said.

After the Senate acts, the House is likely to have only hours to address the Senate version of the "clean" funding bill, a fact that Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, railed against in a statement Sunday. "If the Senate stalls until Monday afternoon ... it would be an act of breathtaking arrogance by the Senate Democratic leadership," he said. "They will be deliberately bringing the nation to the brink of a government shutdown."

But House Republican leaders said Sunday that they were also mulling options on how to proceed in a way that might be acceptable to enough conservative members of their conference as they race against the midnight deadline.

"We have other options for the Senate to look at," said House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif. He would not outline those, or say whether a "clean" funding bill was an option.

One option being considered, House GOP members say, is to revise the CR to include language by Sen. David Vitter, R-La., that would prevent members of Congress and their staffers from receiving exemptions from key Obamacare measures.

But Reid has shot down any provisions that would affect Obamacare.

Indeed, the Senate Democrats' position has opened them up to blistering attacks from Republicans, including Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, who paint Reid and President Obama as unbending. With House Republicans arguing they've acted to prevent a shutdown, they say it's up to Reid to capitulate.

"Let's be clear what the Senate has done," Cruz said on NBC's Meet the Press. "So far Majority Leader Harry Reid has essentially told the House of Representatives and the American people, go jump in a lake. He said, 'I'm not willing to compromise. I'm not willing to even talk.' "

Cruz, who has helped set in motion the latest congressional action against Obamacare, did not lay out his plans on Sunday.

Senate Democrats are betting that the public will blame the GOP for a shutdown, and a contingent of Senate Republicans agree. The thinking is that Cruz has set the GOP on a crash course because Obama has threatened to veto any legislation that repeals or delays the Affordable Care Act.

Asked about the criticism from other Republicans, Cruz was unfazed. "I'm just trying to fight for 26 million Texans and the American people," he said.

The federal government has shut down 17 times since 1976, according to an NBC tally. The last time was for 21 days in late 1995 and early 1996, when House Speaker Newt Gingrich and President Clinton clashed over spending. That shutdown left a deep political scar, with Clinton's approval rating skyrocketing after the shutdown and Republicans shouldering much of the blame.

In a persistent GOP line on several Sunday talk shows, House Republicans said the showdown has resulted from a president who has refused to negotiate over Obamacare.

"People are panicked in this country over higher premiums, lack of access. This law is having a negative effect," House Republican Conference Chairwoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., said on CNN's State of the Union.

She said the standoff will end "with us coming to the table and negotiating. But ... Republicans do not want to shut down the government."

However, House Budget Committee ranking member Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., said on Face the Nation that the Republican effort to delay the law "is a way to prevent millions of Americans from signing up for more affordable health care."

As he put it, "What you see in the House is that Speaker Boehner has essentially handed the gavel over to Senator Cruz."

### **New debt limit deadline is Oct. 17**

Lori Montgomery, The Washington Post

September 25, 2013

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Treasury Secretary Jack Lew warned congressional leaders Wednesday that he will exhaust emergency borrowing measures "no later than Oct. 17," leaving him with less than \$30 billion on hand to pay the nation's bills.

In a letter sent to all members of Congress, Lew urged immediate action to raise the federal debt limit, which stands at \$16.7 trillion. Without additional borrowing authority, Lew warned, cash on hand "would be far short of net expenditures on certain days, which can be as high as \$60 billion."

"If we have insufficient cash on hand," the letter said, "it would be impossible for the United States of America to meet all of its obligations for the first time in our history."

The letter comes a week after Treasury closed the books on the most recent round of quarterly corporate and individual income tax receipts, which Lew previously warned were running a bit behind expectations. It marks the first time Lew has given lawmakers a hard deadline for raising the debt limit; he had previously said he would exhaust emergency borrowing measures in "mid-October."

Lew also cautioned that a move by House Republicans to order Treasury to "prioritize" its payments in the event it ran short of funds "would not protect the full faith and credit of the United States" because "any plan to prioritize some payments over others is simply default by another name."

"The United States should never have to choose, for example, whether to pay Social Security to seniors, pay benefits to our veterans, or make payments to state and local jurisdictions and health care providers under Medicare and Medicaid. There is no way of knowing the damage any prioritization plan would have on our economy and financial markets. It would represent an irresponsible retreat from a core American value: We are a nation that honors all of its commitments," the letter said.

### **Senate Passes Alexander, Udall Resolution for Nuclear Workers National Day of Remembrance**

Senator Lamar Alexander

September 18, 2013

[LINK](#)

Resolution honors sacrifice by Tennesseans and Americans around the country who worked on nuclear weapons arsenal

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"In Tennessee, more than 14,000 workers have made claims for compensation, many of whom worked countless hours with little-understood hazardous materials to build our country's nuclear deterrent."

- Lamar Alexander

WASHINGTON, Sept. 18- The Senate unanimously passed a resolution today by U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and U.S. Senator Mark Udall (D-Colo.) to designate Oct. 30, 2013 as the fifth National Day of Remembrance for nuclear weapons program workers.

"In Tennessee, more than 14,000 workers have made claims for compensation, many of whom worked countless hours with little-understood hazardous materials to build our country's nuclear deterrent," Alexander said. "Many Americans labored behind the scenes, and Tennesseans - like those from Anderson and Roane counties, for example - filed more claims than any other state. It's these workers, and those all around the country, whose sacrifice we seek to honor with this day of remembrance."

The Day of Remembrance will honor all Americans, including tens of thousands of Tennessee men and women, who supported the nation's nuclear efforts since World War II through the Cold War. In addition to Anderson and Roane, these men and women live in Bradley, Blount, Davidson, Knox, Lebanon, Madison, Maury, Morgan, Sevier, Scott and Williamson counties in Tennessee.

### **EM Update, September 2013**

Office of Environmental Management

September 30, 2013

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### **Nevada asks US appeals court to rehear Yucca Mountain licensing case**

Platts

September 26, 2013

[LINK](#)

The state of Nevada has asked a federal appeals court to take another look at whether the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission should be ordered to restart its review of a license application for a high-level nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada.

The petition for a rehearing, filed Thursday with the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, asks that all active judges of the court, plus members of the three-judge panel that first heard the case, take up the case.

A 2-1 decision the court issued August 13 said NRC broke the law when it suspended its congressionally mandated review of the US Department of Energy license application for a repository at Yucca Mountain. The court ordered NRC to restart the licensing proceeding.

In an effort to gear up for a resumption of that work, the NRC has sought input from participants in the earlier Yucca proceeding on how to restart that process. Monday is the deadline for comments.

Nevada's state officials and its congressional delegation have long opposed the federal government's plan to dispose of utility spent fuel in the state, claiming a repository at Yucca Mountain would not be safe.

Marta Adams, a senior deputy attorney general for Nevada, said in an interview Thursday that the state agrees with Chief Judge Merrick Garland's dissenting opinion in the case, that given the limited funds available to NRC, ordering the agency to resume the licensing work would be a "useless thing."

NRC told the court it has about \$11.1 million in unobligated carryover Yucca funds, a fraction of what would be needed to complete the work.

## **Nuclear Power Industry, Lawmakers at Odds over EPA Response Guide**

Douglas P. Guarino, Global Security Newswire

September 23, 2013

[LINK](#)

WASHINGTON -- The nuclear-power industry and some Senate Democrats are at odds over the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's new nuclear-response guidelines, as some lawmakers are concerned the benchmarks are not protective of public health while industry officials want to relax the guidelines further.

The new protective-action guide, which the agency issued in April and accepted public comment on through Sept. 16, is meant to advise federal, state and local officials following a wide range of radiological incidents, such as "dirty bomb" attacks, nuclear power plant meltdowns and problems at U.S. weapons facilities. It is controversial, in part due to suggestions that long standing public-health guidelines pertaining to drinking water and long-term cleanup could be relaxed dramatically in some circumstances.

Some Senate Democrats are concerned the guide may not be protective enough, according to a congressional aide. While the lawmakers did not file comments during the formal public comment period, they intend to make their concerns known to the agency -- likely through some form of

commentary on the new guide or in a letter to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy -- said the aide, who asked not to be named due to not being authorized to discuss the issue.

The nuclear-power industry, meanwhile, argues the document does not relax guidelines for responding to radiological incidents enough. Comments the Nuclear Energy Institute, which represents the industry, submitted Sept. 16 say the agency needs to do a better job balancing efforts to protect the public from radiation exposure with other considerations.

"This importance was highlighted by events in Japan following the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident in 2011," the industry comments say. "Some of the decisions taken for a single purpose (in this case, with the primary intent to protect against radiation exposure) were extremely disruptive and may have resulted in more social harm than good."

In an effort to back this claim, the industry group cites two papers published this year, one by members of the private International Commission on Radiological Protection and another by the World Health Organization. Neither document provides any direct evidence that scaling back any specific protective actions would have caused a net benefit for the Japanese population, however.

Much like the industry comments, the paper by the ICRP members only discusses the concept of balancing protective actions with other considerations in general terms.

"For instance, evacuating people from their homes obviously results in serious disturbance to normal life," the ICRP members say. "Not all decisions were as clearly justified and it is unclear whether they really produced more harm than good."

The ICRP members, however, do not elaborate on which specific actions in Japan were not clearly justified. Nor do they offer any data showing that leaving evacuated people in place would have improved their overall well-being.

Similarly, the report by the World Health Organization says "both radiological and non-radiological risks," such as those related to mental health, should be considered when making decisions on protective actions. Based on a preliminary study, the WHO report says "the health effects of radiation exposure resulting from the Fukushima ... accident inside and outside Japan are likely to be less ominous than the socioeconomic impact." It does not say, however, that limiting any specific protective actions following the meltdown would have improved the situation overall.

Environmentalists, meanwhile, argue it is premature for the organization to even suggest the health impacts from the Fukushima meltdown will be limited over the long term, given that new information about the amount of radiation released into the environment is continuing to come to light.

"Look at what's going on now: They're dumping huge amounts of radioactivity into the ocean -- no one expected that in 2011," Daniel

Hirsch, a nuclear policy lecturer at the University of California-Santa Cruz, told Global Security Newswire. "We could have large numbers of cancer from ingestion of fish."

Even if the preliminary estimates of health effects prove reliable, they would not justify a relaxation of protective actions, argued Hirsch, whose criticism of the new EPA guide has been endorsed by more than 100 watchdog groups. If anything, it would suggest that the actions were successful and should be repeated in similar situations, he said.

Ralph Andersen, NEI senior director for radiation safety and environmental protection, acknowledged in a statement to GSN that the WHO report does not directly state that protective actions in Japan may have been counterproductive. Instead, it infers this as a possibility, he argued.

"Our point is not that authoritative organizations have firmly concluded that actions taken in Japan have led to more harm than good ... it is not about second-guessing or assigning blame," Andersen said. "Rather we are noting that the lessons-learned from Fukushima reinforce the need for balance and flexibility in protective action decision-making."

One way industry says the new EPA guide should achieve this is by relaxing advice on when it is necessary to relocate the general population following a radiological incident.

The new guide says such decisions should be based on efforts to prevent individuals from being exposed to more than 2,000 millirems of radiation during the first year after an incident and no more than 500 millirems per year in subsequent years. Industry calls this "conservative" and recommends instead adopting a range of 2,000 to 10,000 millirems per year, pursuant to the guidelines of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The NEI comments also back the new guide's elimination of the agency's prior recommendation that protective actions aim to cap exposure at 5,000 millirems over 50 years, along with the document's suggestion that long term cleanup "must take into account a wide variety of factors" and that following the agency's normal cleanup rules might not be workable.

Environmentalists, along with some EPA and state officials, have opposed this, arguing the agency should stick to its normal Superfund rules under which long term cleanups are designed so that no more than one in 10,000 people would be expected to develop cancer from radiation exposure in the worst case scenario. Superfund's ideal risk is one in 1 million.

"These risk levels have been accepted as reasonable for even huge, heavily contaminated Superfund sites [such as the Manhattan project site at Hanford, Washington] that are half the size of a state, and thus should not be relaxed in the PAGs," say the comments signed by more than 100 groups, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Sierra Club.

"The main reason for the reduction in protection is to save money and liability for industries and agencies that carry out practices that could

result in large radioactive contamination, mainly the nuclear power industry and the atomic weapons fuel chain agencies and their contractors," the Sept. 16 comments argue.

By most official estimates, about one in 20 people would be expected to develop cancer if exposed to 2,000 millirems of radiation per year for 30 years, while 10,000 millirems per year over the same time period would have a risk of roughly one in five.

When it comes to making decisions about contaminated drinking water, the new EPA guide references the agency's normal rules, which are designed to prevent people from being exposed to more than 4 millirems of radiation per year. It says, however, that far less stringent guidelines might be worth considering after a radiological incident however, and directs the reader to IAEA recommendations that in some cases are 27,000 times less strict.

Industry says the agency should not use its normal drinking-water rules, not only during the immediate aftermath of a radiological incident, but also during the intermediate and late phases of response, which can last years. The NEI comments complain the normal EPA drinking-water rules are based on the linear no-threshold model for cancer risk, which assumes there is no safe level of radiation exposure and that the risk of cancer is directly proportional to the level of exposure.

The agency uses the model pursuant to the recommendations of the National Academies of Science, which rejected other theories and based its suggestions largely on studies of atomic-bomb survivors in Japan and some other data. Industry argues, however, that the development of drinking-water guidelines "may consider but should not rely upon" the NAS model and should use "health effects data from actual radiological contamination experience of drinking water."

Environmentalists oppose straying from the NAS model for projecting cancer risk and fear the new guide could allow the agency to do so. In Sept. 16 comments on the new guide, Diane D'Arrigo, of the Nuclear Information & Resource Service, raises concerns that some EPA officials who favor relaxing the agency's normal rules have also appeared to challenge the model in presentations to international officials. Citing GSN reporting on the presentations, D'Arrigo notes one presentation compared the model to hormesis, a model previously rejected by EPA and NAS scientists that suggests low levels of radiation exposure is actually beneficial.

Reaction to the new EPA guide from state and local government officials is mixed. Comments from the Washington Health Department's radiation office say drinking-water guidelines should be relaxed for a short time following an incident, but not as much as they would under the IAEA guidelines referenced in the document.

The Sept. 10 comments suggest a threshold for water contaminated with iodine-131 of 2,700 picocuries per liter, 900 times less strict than the normal EPA rule of 3 picocuries per liter. The Washington office argues that, had it followed the enforceable EPA rule during the initial aftermath of the Fukushima accident in Japan, it would have had to implement protective actions due to rainwater contaminated by radioactive fallout

that crossed the Pacific Ocean.

During that time, rainwater in the state was contaminated by radioactive iodine-131 at levels that exceeded the legal limit "by at least 50 times," the state office argues. It insists "no health risk existed" at this level, arguing that the normal EPA drinking water rules assume 70 years of exposure.

Similarly, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency says it believes the normal EPA drinking water rules are too strict following a radiological incident but that the IAEA recommendations are too lax. It recommends guidelines aimed to prevent exposure to more than 500 millirems per year, noting that the normal EPA rules are based on 4 millirems per year and that the IAEA recommendations are based on 10,000 millirems per year.

Like industry, the Illinois and Washington offices back the new guide's deletion of a recommendation that protective actions aim to cap radiation exposure at 5,000 millirems over 50 years. The Illinois agency, however, supports a "risk-informed regulatory approach to cleanup," an apparent reference to the way long term cleanups are normally conducted pursuant to Superfund rules.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services has said the usual Superfund guidelines should be made the rule for long-term cleanup after radiological incidents, rather than being presented as an option. It also supports the use of normal EPA drinking-water rules.

### **Hanford regulators and watchdog groups seek more information on new cleanup proposal**

The Associated Press

September 25, 2013

[LINK](#)

SPOKANE, Washington -- Government regulators and watchdog groups want more information about a new Department of Energy proposal to speed cleanup of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, the nation's most polluted nuclear site.

The agency on Tuesday released a report, which it called a "framework," stating that starting treatment of some of Hanford's radioactive waste without sending it to the troubled vitrification plant's Pretreatment Facility could speed work.

"I remain committed to ensuring that DOE provides a full, detailed plan for comprehensively addressing the complicated challenges we still face," U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., said in a statement. The framework was not the comprehensive plan she wanted, Murray said.

"We have requested additional technical information to fully understand the details of the phased approach for the treatment of waste in Hanford's aging tanks," Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said in a press release.

The framework will drive talks as the Energy Department works with the state to resolve concerns about the slow pace of Hanford waste treatment, Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said Tuesday.

The framework "represents a prudent and reasonable approach to immobilize waste in a glass form as soon as practicable while working to resolve the technical issues," Moniz said. Work has been stopped on portions of the \$12.2 billion vitrification plant, including the Pretreatment Facility, until technical issues are resolved.

Hanford, located near the Tri-Cities in southcentral Washington, is the nation's most polluted nuclear weapons production site. There are 56 million gallons of radioactive waste stored in underground tanks, at least one of which is leaking into the ground.

The federal government created Hanford during World War II to build the atomic bomb. The cleanup is expected to take decades. The effort -- at a price tag of about \$2 billion annually -- has cost taxpayers \$40 billion to date and is estimated to cost \$115 billion more.

The most challenging task so far has been the removal of highly radioactive waste from the 177 aging, underground tanks and construction of a plant to treat that waste.

Hanford Challenge, a Seattle-based watchdog group, was critical of the framework proposal.

"The costs of building newer infrastructure to treat Hanford's tank waste will be astounding," executive director Tom Carpenter said.

The group contended that money would be better spent getting waste out of leaking tanks, building sturdier tanks, treating contaminated groundwater and excavating contaminated ground.

"DOE holds out an uncertain proposal as a quick fix," Carpenter said. "This is as opposed to a tried and true solution of simply building new tanks."

Key recommendations in the report include sending some of the waste now held in underground tanks directly to the Low Activity Waste Facility to be converted into a glasslike substance. The waste would then be disposed of at a Hanford landfill.

To allow some low-activity waste to bypass the Pretreatment Facility, a temporary plant might be built between the Hanford tank farms and the Low Activity Waste Facility to remove some of the solids and radioactive elements from some liquid waste, the report said.

In addition, up to 1.4 million gallons of waste held in 11 underground tanks might be sent to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, a national repository in New Mexico for transuranic waste. To allow that, the Energy Department must get the waste classified as transuranic rather than high

level radioactive waste.

Sending the waste to New Mexico would allow tanks to be emptied significantly sooner than if DOE must wait until the vitrification plant's Pretreatment and High Level Waste Facilities are ready to accept waste, the report said.

## **DOE extends CH2M Hill Hanford contract worth \$2.1B**

Annette Cary, Tri-City Herald

September 27, 2013

[LINK](#)

Richland -- The Department of Energy has extended CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co.'s contract for Hanford environmental cleanup work for five more years.

DOE notified CH2M Hill on Thursday of the contract extension, valued at about \$2.1 billion.

"DOE has determined that CH2M Hill remains the best value to the government," Hanford employees were told in a memo.

CH2M Hill was awarded a contract for central Hanford and groundwater cleanup in 2008 after a bidding process.

The contract, initially valued at about \$4.5 billion total, included an initial five year period and an option for a second five years of work.

For the first five years, the contract value was increased to about \$3.6 billion because of \$1.3 billion in one-time funding from the American Recovery Act.

"DOE's decision to continue working with CHPRC is due to your work in meeting and exceeding our client's expectations in cleanup and safety," John Fulton, CH2M Hill president, said in a message to employees Thursday.

DOE announced in April 2012 that it planned to extend the contract for five years.

Not only did CH2M Hill remain the best value on the basis of price and other factors, but extending the contract also would ensure continuity as major projects are finished over the next five years, Matt McCormick, manager of the DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office, said then.

DOE considered CH2M Hill's performance in meeting cost and schedule goals, the quality of its work and its success in taking on additional work paid for with federal economic stimulus money, DOE said in 2012.

CH2M Hill and its main subcontractors had about 1,800 employees then, but that has dropped to 1,400 now.

CH2M Hill will continue work to prepare the Plutonium Finishing Plant for demolition.

It will remove radioactive sludge from the K West Reactor Basin and move it to central Hanford, protecting the Columbia River.

It also will continue to operate plants that pump up contaminated groundwater, clean it and then return clean water to the ground. CH2M Hill treated a record amount of groundwater this year.

CH2M Hill also is responsible for operating waste treatment and storage facilities in central Hanford.

If money is available, CH2M Hill's work over the next five years also could include retrieving temporarily buried radioactive waste and shipping it to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for disposal.

It also could add more methods for protecting the Columbia River from contaminants in the groundwater and could speed up the treatment or shipping of waste now at Hanford's Central Waste Complex.

### **Los Alamos picks three companies for remediation work**

Gary Gerew, Albuquerque Business First

September 24, 2013

[LINK](#)

Los Alamos National Laboratory has selected three businesses for environmental support services work worth up to \$400 million over a five-year period.

The businesses were selected based on a technical proficiency and lowest price basis. The companies -- Terranear PMC, Navarro Research and Engineering, Inc. and Portage, Inc. -- were chosen from 11 prospective bidders, according to a news release issued by the laboratory. Task orders under this agreement will be awarded based on available funding.

"In order to achieve our environmental goals, we partner with businesses that are qualified, efficient and cost effective," said Pete Maggiore, assistant manager for the National Nuclear Security Administration's Los Alamos Field Office Environmental Projects Office. "The companies selected for this agreement demonstrate those capabilities."

Environmental support services work includes sampling, remediation and preparing reports for regulatory submittal.

### **Paducah Advisory Board Recommends Waiting For GE Hitachi Decision**

John Paul Henry, WKMS

September 20, 2013

[LINK](#)

In an effort to encourage economic development, the Paducah Citizens Advisory Board recommended the Department of Energy postpone making a decision that could affect General Electric Hitachi's interest in Paducah for another six months on Thursday at the board meeting. The board recommended the DOE postpone making its proposal for dealing with contaminated materials at the gaseous diffusion plant.

Newly appointed advisory Board Chair Ben Peterson said the DOE will likely recommend on-site disposal for economic reasons, and the board wants to avoid using land GE Hitachi might find valuable.

The DOE has advanced its timeline to announce a decision on the GE Hitachi proposal by Thanksgiving.

"We obviously need that as a community to happen," Peterson said. "It's replacement jobs. It also brings a lot of prestige to the community, being the names that it is. As well as research and spinoff businesses."

Peterson said the Paducah Citizens Advisory Board, in a planning session last week, outlined clear goals as central to the community which include: Securing 370 million dollars annually from the DOE for cleanup, speeding up the DOE's GE Hitachi decision, and advancing the cooperation of all parties towards a common vision of site redevelopment and cleanup.

Peterson said the goal would be to receive between \$9 billion and \$11 billion through 2040 from the DOE.

### **UT receives DOE funds, ORNL help for spent nuclear fuel studies**

University of Tennessee

September 26, 2013

[LINK](#)

KNOXVILLE--The question of what to do with spent nuclear fuel in the U.S. has never been definitively answered. A University of Tennessee in Knoxville professor has received funding from the U.S. Department of Energy to develop new capabilities for evaluating potential alternatives to directly disposing of used fuel.

The award is part of the DOE's 2013 Nuclear Energy University Programs which is awarding \$42 million to 38 American universities and colleges for nuclear energy research and development projects focused on developing innovative solutions.

A proposal by Steven Skutnik, assistant professor in nuclear engineering, was awarded \$755,000 to develop new capabilities for a fuel cycle simulator called CYCLUS by building on an Oak Ridge National Laboratory software package for nuclear fuel modeling called ORIGEN.

The resulting tool, called a flexible reactor analysis module, will allow scientists to assess the relative benefits of different choices for managing

spent nuclear fuel such as directly disposing of it, storing it for extended periods of time, or reprocessing it to recover materials for reuse as fuel in a reactor.

Many countries choose to chemically reprocess their used nuclear fuel, which can extract more energy out of fuel and reduce the total long-lived waste. However, the U.S. has a long-standing policy in which used nuclear fuel is designated for direct disposal. Recently, a plan to dispose of spent fuel at Yucca Mountain in Nevada has been scrapped leaving the nation without a long-term home for the radioactive material.

Thus, the DOE is investigating several alternative fuel cycle strategies. Skutnik's project will help assess how different fuel cycle choices influence factors such as the demand for raw resources, nuclear waste management, and nuclear facility designs.

"We will look at more kinds of fuel cycles by mapping out what the fuel will look like," Skutnik said. "So, we can look at the effect of irradiating fuel for longer times--which is like squeezing just a little more juice out of an orange--or new reactor types or even speculative fuel cycles, such as those based on reactors which use long-lived waste products from current reactors as fuel for future reactors. Using these tools opens up a lot more doors in terms of both sensitivity and the kinds of scenarios we can look at."

The goal is to help the public and policymakers understand the impacts and trade-offs of various nuclear fuel cycle options.

"If we're going to consider significant changes to policies which impact the nuclear fuel cycle, it's helpful to have tools to tell us what we can expect the impacts are going to be," Skutnik said.

Collaborating institutions are ORNL and National Nuclear Laboratory in the United Kingdom.

The NEUPs support multifaceted projects to develop breakthroughs for the U.S. nuclear energy industry. Universities lead the three-year projects, working in collaboration with the nuclear industry, national laboratories and international partners.

For more information on the specific awards, visit <http://www.neup.gov>.