

ECA Update: January 22, 2014



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Washington, D.C.
February 27-28, 2014

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ECA Peer Exchange: DOE Moving Forward

Washington, D.C.
February 27-28, 2014
[REGISTRATION](#)

Registration is now open for the ECA Peer Exchange on February 27th at the Liaison Hotel in Washington, D.C. Join the communities and local governments around DOE sites as we discuss key issues. DOE Officials, administration officials and Washington insiders will discuss important issues and provide you with their insights.

Thursday, February 27th (8:30am to 4:00pm)

ECA Peer Exchange: DOE Moving Forward

Friday, February 28th (9:00am to Noon)

Board meeting for ECA members; ECA Board of Directors meeting and ECA Executive Board Elections

Invited Speakers

- Congressman Mike Simpson
- Secretary of Energy Ernie Moniz
- David Klaus, Deputy Under Secretary for Management and Performance, DOE
- Betsy Connell, Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary, DOE
- Dave Huizenga, Senior Advisor for Environmental Management, DOE
- Pete Lyons, Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy, DOE
- Bruce Held, Acting Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, DOE
- Mary Louise Wagner, Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary, DOE

More Information

[ECA Peer Exchange: DOE Moving Forward](#)

Washington, D.C.
February 27-28, 2014
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Topics will include

- FY 2015 Budget
- DOE Priorities for 2014-15
- Facilitating More Efficient DOE/NNSA Sites
- Modernization and the Future of the NNSA Complex
- Nuclear Energy

Registration Procedures

To register for the meeting go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/eca-peer-exchange-doe-moving-forward-tickets-7965606343>.

- \$200 for ECA Members, Government and Public Sector participants
- \$495.00 for Private Sector participants

Meeting location

Liaison Hotel
415 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

To make your hotel reservations call (866) 233-4642 and reference yourself as part of the Energy Communities Alliance group or provide the reservation ID: ECA221.

We have secured a group rate of \$219.00 per night. The cut-off date for your reservation is Friday, February 14, 2014. Please make your reservations early!

Increased Funding for Nuclear R&D in Omnibus Budget Bill

Nuclear Energy Institute
January 15, 2014
[LINK](#)

A bipartisan, bicameral omnibus spending bill for 2014 contains an increase in funding for nuclear energy research and development above the president's budget request. The House of Representatives passed the measure Jan. 15. The Senate's vote was expected to follow quickly.

A summary of the outlays for energy and water on the House Appropriations Committee's website noted that the \$889 million appropriation "to further the next generation of nuclear power while ensuring the safety and longevity of our current plants" is \$36 million above the fiscal 2013 enacted level and \$154 million above the president's request.

The allocation includes \$110 million to fund the Energy Department's

cost-shared small reactor licensing support program--at \$40 million more than the president sought. DOE is working with two small reactor vendors, Babcock & Wilcox and NuScale, to ready the reactors for design certification by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and deployment by 2025 (see Nuclear Energy Overview, Dec. 12, 2013, and Nov. 21, 2012).

The industry welcomed the increased funding. "The recognition that small reactors hold great promise as a future supplier of low-carbon electricity and as an export technology that can create many thousands of U.S. jobs is heartening," the Nuclear Energy Institute said in a statement. "This is a smart investment in a brighter, more secure energy future for our nation."

The appropriations bill also ensures that the NRC can use \$13 million the agency has in remaining carryover funds to continue its safety review of the shuttered Yucca Mountain used fuel repository project. The Obama administration withdrew the Energy Department's license application for the project in 2009.

The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals last August directed the NRC to resume its review of DOE's license application for the repository, consistent with the provisions of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. In response, NRC Chairwoman Allison Macfarlane ordered the agency to use its unspent \$13 million in Yucca Mountain-specific funds to complete the safety evaluation reports on the application (see Nuclear Energy Overview, Nov. 19, 2013).

A final licensing decision for Yucca Mountain would require additional steps beyond completing the safety report, but the NRC said it does not have sufficient funds to complete them.

The spending bill also restores funding for programs that support nuclear-related university fellowships and scholarships at DOE (\$5.5 million) and NRC (\$20 million). Industry priorities were also included, such as \$30 million for DOE's Advanced Light Water Reactor Sustainability Program and \$60 million for advanced accident-tolerant nuclear fuels.

The bill also includes provisions on issues not directly related to the budget. For example, several senators have decried an NRC guideline change that would allow only the chairmen and ranking members of congressional committees with NRC oversight to receive sensitive documents from the agency. A provision in the omnibus bill reverses the NRC's new guideline, allowing all oversight committee members to see sensitive NRC materials on request.

The \$1.1 trillion fiscal 2014 omnibus budget, the first to be completed by Congress since 2012, covers the entire federal discretionary budget for all government agencies. It results from the work of a bipartisan group from both houses of Congress and attempts to forestall issues that led to the government shutdown last October.

The House voted Jan. 14 to extend by three days the continuing resolution, which has funded the government at 2013 levels since fiscal 2014 began and expires Jan. 15--so that the bill could be passed and

signed into law.

A seismic shift on UPF? NNSA to develop alternative scenarios for getting out of 9212, replacing uranium capabilities within 'original cost range'

Frank Munger's Atomic City Underground

January 15, 2014

[LINK](#)

The National Nuclear Security Administration this evening confirmed that it will begin to develop "alternative mission delivery scenarios" for getting out of the aged 9212 complex at the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant in Oak Ridge by 2025 and replacing the enriched uranium capabilities within the "original cost range."

This appears to be the first step in scaling down the size and scope of the Uranium Processing Facility and likely focusing first and foremost on a new facility that can do the uranium work done in 9212, parts of which date back to the World War II Manhattan Project.

The NNSA response came as a follow-on to language contained in the 2014 Omnibus spending bill and report explaining a \$16 million cut in funding -- to a reported \$309 million -- for the Uranium Processing Facility, whose price tag has been the subject of growing scrutiny and concern. Just as important as the growing cost was a concern that the project wasn't moving fast enough to get out of 9212 by 2025.

The NNSA statement on the "original cost range" apparently is referencing the \$4.2 billion to \$6.5 billion cost range for UPF that's been in effect for the past couple of years, although there were earlier (and lower) cost ranges for the multibillion-dollar project to replace Y-12's production capabilities. There have been various analyses over the past year that have suggested the UPF could end up costing \$10 billion or more.

Here is the NNSA's statement released this evening:

"NNSA is committed to its mission of nuclear safety and security while working to improve operations, save taxpayer dollars, and plan for the future. Consistent with NNSA's commitment to fully mature designs before establishing project baselines, the UPF Project's design, engineering, and technology development efforts are continuing to a point such that NNSA can develop a credible cost and schedule estimate.

"Concurrently and in accordance with our project governance protocols, NNSA will begin to develop alternative mission delivery scenarios to ensure that we replace the Building 9212 enriched uranium capability -- which represents our highest mission risk -- within our original cost range and in line with the 2025 commitment that Acting Administrator Bruce Held testified to before the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board."

It appears that now, even more than before, the priority will be on

establishing a replacement facility for the 9212 complex, instead of building a mega-sized UPF that would ultimately include the uranium machining and warhead assembly/disassembly work that was to originally have been part of the facility. The replacement facility for 9212, which could still be called UPF, will apparently be significantly smaller. The change of direction also means that the UPF design team may be asked once again to redo at least a portion of their work.

More than year ago, the design work had to be redone because the original design for UPF wasn't big enough to accommodate all of the needed equipment. Now, however, it appears that the challenge could be scaling back the design to a reasonable size to do the uranium processing work now done at 9212.

There have been suggestions out there for a while that the NNSA might look to more of a modular approach in modernizing the production capabilities at the Oak Ridge plant, and that seems to be the direction things are headed.

If the decision is made to replace Building 9215 (where uranium machining takes place) and Beta-2E (where warhead components are assembled and taken apart and where quality inspections take place), those facilities could be built separately.

Whether to proceed along those lines and -- under what timetable -- will apparently be a part of upcoming reviews on the entire UPF strategy.

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham voices support for SRS missions

Aiken Standard

January 21, 2014

[LINK](#)

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said one of his main goals while sitting on the Senate Appropriations Committee was getting full funding for the Savannah River Site.

During his visit to the area on Monday, Graham stopped by the Aiken Standard to talk about his fight to acquire adequate funding for the Site.

"This budget was a responsible budget fiscally... we were able to make the case for SRS that the money we spend today will save us a lot of money in the future," Graham said.

Those savings include an agreement to close the liquid waste tanks at SRS. Graham said the fashion of the agreement will save the Department of Energy \$16 billion.

"Things like that go a long way in proving to your colleagues that you're being responsible," he said. "When it came time to get full appropriations, our responsibility showed that we, at SRS, have gone out of our way to save money and that we need funding."

In addition to tank closures, Graham also voiced his support for the MOX

program. MOX has been fully funded with appropriations of \$343 million - \$23 million more than the federal budget request.

Like the tank closures, Graham said underfunding the MOX program would cost more in the future than fully funding it now.

"We're going to re-evaluate the cost overruns of MOX but we must also remind the government of all the money we've saved in the past," he said. "Our approach of trying to be good stewards of taxpayers' dollars and embracing rational, environmental policies have rebounded to our benefit."

Graham also discussed his future vision for SRS, which he feels should include the development of small modular reactors - or SMRs.

The reactors have been a hot topic over the last several months and are defined as reactors with electricity outputs of less than 300 megawatts. They are said to allow for less on-site construction and increased containment efficiency.

Graham said he would like to see the development of SMRs at the Site, as well as see continued growth at the Savannah River National Lab. Both visions, he said, are part of keeping SRS relevant in the years after waste cleanup and the construction of the MOX facility.

"I want to make sure SRS is relevant in the 21st century and that it's not a place where we clean and close-up," he said. "I want us to have missions beyond MOX so the people and community can continue to prosper."

In addition to visiting the Standard, Graham also visited other areas in Aiken County and held a meet-and-greet session at the National Wild Turkey Federation in Edgefield.

Derrek Asberry is a beat reporter with the Aiken Standard. He joined the paper in June. He is originally from Vidalia, Ga., and a graduate of Georgia Southern University.