

Monica Regalbuto named EM Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary



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In this update:

Monica Regalbuto named EM Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

EMFEDCAST

Tri-City leaders want say in Hanford land use

Tri-City Herald

DOE seeks input on German fuel possibly coming to SRS

Aiken Standard

Mississippi PSC goes on record opposing nuclear waste storage

Sun Herald

Levin: No Floor Time Scheduled Yet for 2015 NDAA

Defense News

Reactor Retirements Will Hurt U.S. Emissions Cuts

MIT Technology Review

Jobs available as nuclear workforce ages out

CNBC

Monica Regalbuto named EM Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

EMFEDCAST

June 5, 2014

Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased to announce that Dr. Monica Regalbuto has been selected for the position of the Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Environmental Management (EM), effective June 16. She will lead the mission units within EM and use her technical expertise to help EM continue advancing the important cleanup missions we have across our remaining sites.

Jack Craig, who has served as acting Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary since January, will remain at EM headquarters for the foreseeable future. He and Jim Owendoff will continue to provide expert guidance and advice to me, Monica, and Mark Whitney, who was named Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary last month.

Monica is currently the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fuel Cycle Technologies with the Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy. She previously served as a Senior Program Manager with EM's former Office of Waste Processing. From 2003 to 2008, Monica served as the head of the Process Chemistry and Engineering Department in Argonne National Laboratory's Chemical Sciences and Engineering Division and managed a group of 30 researchers. Monica has led research directly related to EM's mission, such as the successful demonstration of the Caustic-Side Solvent Extraction process that separates cesium-137 from high-level radioactive waste. She has authored multiple journal articles, reports, and presentations, and holds six patents.

Please join me in congratulating Monica on her new position and welcoming her back to EM.

Sincerely,
Dave Huizenga

Tri-City leaders want say in Hanford land use

Tri-City Herald

June 3, 2014

[LINK](#)

Tri-City residents and elected officials should be given a say on the future use of Hanford land as environmental cleanup is completed, elected officials near the nuclear reservation told federal leaders in a letter Tuesday.

More Hanford land along the Columbia River should not be added to the Hanford Reach National Monument managed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service unless the agency has a "strong willingness" to support future public access as proposed by the local community, they said in the letter.

It was sent to Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz and Interior Secretary Sally Jewell by the mayors of Richland, Kennewick, Pasco and West Richland; the chairmen of the Benton and Franklin county commissions; the executive directors of the ports of Benton and Pasco; the Tri-City Development Council and the Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau.

The stand is at odds with two local groups, both leaders in ecological preservation, which have told congressional leaders that they support adding more uncontaminated Hanford land to the national monument.

Ridges to Rivers Open Space Network has said that Fish and Wildlife would assure proper management of the land and the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society also has supported expanding the monument.

The monument was created in 2000 from the security perimeter around the production portion of the Hanford nuclear reservation. President Clinton directed the energy secretary to consult with the interior secretary on the possibility of adding more land to the monument as Hanford land was released from environmental cleanup.

The letter sent Tuesday recommended that a public access plan be developed cooperatively by DOE, the Tri-Cities community and the National Park Service, as some historic areas of Hanford could be included in a proposed Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

The public access plan should include the proposed park, some land along the Columbia River and the potential for public entry near both the Vernita Bridge and the Hanford 300 Area just north of Richland.

Officials signing the letter said they respect Fish and Wildlife. But "we recognize that adding additional property to an already underfunded and understaffed agency could be doing a complete disservice to both the Fish and Wildlife Service and to our community," the letter said.

TRIDEC and the Visitor and Convention Bureau paid for a 2013 study to look at possible future access to clean Hanford lands. The study created a possible vision for the land with controlled public access for hiking, biking and camping. The earliest available access could be a seven-mile section of trail along the river from near the former Hanford town site to

the old White Bluffs ferry landing.

The proposal would tie in with the national park proposal, allowing visitors to see what remains of communities where settlers were ordered out to make room for a secret project to produce plutonium for atomic bombs during World War II.

The proposal could serve as a starting point for discussions, the letter said. It reminded federal officials that Hanford land was owned by individuals, the county and state before the federal government condemned it in 1943 for the Manhattan Project.

Part of local leadership's concern with Fish and Wildlife management of more land is that about two-thirds of the national monument remains closed to the public. Fish and Wildlife says that is largely out of its control.

Some of the land is still being used by DOE as a buffer zone around areas at Hanford with radiological material. Rattlesnake Mountain has been designated a traditional cultural property and the tribes have opposed limited public access for tours there.

DOE seeks input on German fuel possibly coming to SRS

Aiken Standard

June 5, 2014

[LINK](#)

Wednesday marked the beginning of a seven-week long public comment period during which local residents can offer their opinions on German nuclear spent fuel potentially landing at the Savannah River Site.

In a federal register notice, the Department of Energy invited anyone to submit comments on the issue, based on a proposal from DOE to accept, process and dispose of used nuclear fuel from Germany containing approximately 900 kilograms of highly-enriched uranium, or HEU.

The comment period began on Wednesday and will end on July 21.

In addition, officials will host a public meeting on Tuesday, June 24, at the North Augusta Community Center located at 495 Brookside Drive. The meeting will be held from 6:30 to 9 p.m. and will offer the opportunity for individuals to comment further.

To submit written comments, the public can send letters to Andrew Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer, U.S. Department of Energy, P.O. Box B, Aiken, South Carolina 29802. Residents can also email comments to Grainger at drew.grainger@srs.gov.

"DOE will give equal weight to written comments and oral comments received at the public scoping meeting," officials wrote in the register notice.

The Energy Department signed a Notice of Intent last week to prepare an environmental assessment to analyze the potential environmental impacts of accepting the spent nuclear fuel.

If the deal goes through, DOE would install, in H-Canyon at SRS, a system capable of chemically remove the graphite from the fuel kernels using a technology being developed by the Savannah River National Laboratory.

In December 2012, the lab signed a \$1.5 million Work for Others

Agreement with the German entity currently managing the fuel, initiating the early development of the graphite digestion technology.

SRS Citizens Advisory Board members and activist groups, including SRS Watch, have spoken against accepting new shipments of nuclear fuel at the Site.

"While some at SRS are eyeing the large sum of money that could be made on processing the spent fuel at SRS, Germany is obligated to implement the best practices in managing its own highly radioactive commercial spent fuel, and that does not include dumping their problem on the Savannah River Site," wrote Tom Clements from SRS Watch.

Mississippi PSC goes on record opposing nuclear waste storage

Sun Herald
June 3, 2014
[LINK](#)

The Mississippi Public Service Commission has become the first state agency to go on record opposing storage of the nation's nuclear waste in Mississippi, Northern District PSC Commissioner Brandon Presley said Tuesday.

With a unanimous vote, the commission passed a resolution calling on the federal government to cease consideration of any area in the state as a potential site for a national repository, Presley said in a news release. The resolution cites Mississippi's long-standing, official policy objecting to waste storage in the state and demands reconsideration of the originally developed site at Yucca Mountain, Nev.

"I was proud to sponsor these resolutions that clearly say 'no' to the plans of the U.S. Department of Energy and others to make Mississippi the nation's nuclear waste dump Mississippians have paid \$80 million to send nuclear waste to Nevada, and that's where it should go, period," Presley said. "I am shocked that the Department of Energy recently said that they have continued a dialogue with officials in Mississippi related to this absurd idea."

Southern District Commissioner Stephen Renfroe said one idea that had been floated was to use the state's salt domes to store the waste.

"The idea of nuclear waste disposal in Mississippi is not a good one," he said. "People of Mississippi are nearly unanimous on that front.

"I'm disappointed the federal government began the Yucca Mountain development then abandoned it after considerable spending there."

Levin: No Floor Time Scheduled Yet for 2015 NDAA

Defense News
June 4, 2014
[LINK](#)

WASHINGTON -- US Senate leaders have yet to schedule floor time for the Armed Services Committee's 2015 Pentagon policy bill as the panel's chairman wants to avoid a sequel to last year's chaotic late-year passage.

SASC Chairman Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., told CongressWatch on Wednesday he has no indication when the panel's version of the 2015

National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) will hit the upper chamber floor.

The committee passed its version of the bill on May 22, which would clear the Pentagon to spend \$514 billion in its base 2015 budget.

Levin said he wants to avoid a repeat of last year, when the bill sat idle for months before a version hastily negotiated by SASC and House Armed Services leaders and senior staff finally passed in December after a fight between Democrats and Republicans over amendments and process.

Since then, the two parties have continued to battle over amendments, meaning the NDAA could again become victim to the political squabble.

Senate Majority Leader Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., has accused Republicans of reneging on agreements about amendments, and proposing new ones out of the blue after he has agreed to others.

Senate Minority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., on May 6 took to the floor to charge that "the Senate has had eight votes since [last] July on amendments that we wished to vote on."

Agreements on amendments can sink legislation in the Senate because 60 votes are required to end debate and move to a final vote. The Democrats control the chamber, but are five votes shy of the 60-vote threshold.

Reactor Retirements Will Hurt U.S. Emissions Cuts

MIT Technology Review

May 7, 2014

[LINK](#)

Greenhouse gas emissions within the United States have been trending downward for the past few years, mainly because coal-fired generation is declining (see: "How and Why U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Are Falling"). Coal's decline will likely continue, given an abundance of domestic gas and the many coal plant retirements expected over the next several years.

But a new report from the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (formerly the Pew Center on Global Climate Change) is a reminder that coal's share of electricity is not the only one that could substantially decline in the next several years. Nuclear's share appears likely to shrink as well, and the likely greenhouse gas emissions increase could imperil the country's chances of meeting its pledge to reduce emissions by 17 percent relative to 2005 levels by 2020. An aging reactor fleet, cheap natural gas, renewable energy incentives, and other economic factors could lead to "a wave of U.S. reactor retirements in the coming years," writes Doug Vine, a senior fellow at the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions.

The report notes that four reactors were retired in 2013, and another is slated to go offline this fall, representing just over 4 percent of the total U.S. nuclear capacity. Depending on how that generating capacity is replaced, these retirements alone could lead to a release of an additional 12 million to 18.25 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year--or the same amount emitted yearly by two million to 3.6 million passenger vehicles, according to the report.

There are five new reactors currently under construction, but the first one won't be ready until December 2015 at the earliest, and the others won't

start up until 2017 or later. In the meantime, subtracted nuclear capacity is likely to be replaced in large part by fossil fuel plants.

Nuclear power supplied 19 percent of the total electricity in the U.S. in 2012 (See "Nuclear Options"), and it accounted for 60 percent of electricity generated at plants that don't emit carbon dioxide. Whereas the total emissions associated with nuclear power is similar to that of wind or solar power, unlike wind and solar plants, nuclear plants can run 24 hours a day, seven days a week, making them suitable to provide baseload power.

For perspective, consider this: the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions calculates that in a scenario in which nuclear power was replaced completely by fossil fuels after 2012, the added emissions between then and 2025 would be four to six billion metric tons. That's the same amount the EPA hopes to avoid, over the same time frame, through vehicle efficiency standards.

Jobs available as nuclear workforce ages out

CNBC

June 6, 2014

[LINK](#)

At SCE&G's V.C. Summer Nuclear Station, a massive blue crane splits the South Carolina summer sky, a telltale sign of the \$10 billion project underway.

The SCANA Corp. unit is in the midst of building two new nuclear reactors in Jenkinsville, S.C. They are the first reactors to be built in the U.S. in 30 years, on a 240-acre site that already houses SCE&G's three-decade-old V.C. Summer Unit 1.

At its peak, the project will employ 3,500 construction workers, but the utility is focused on hiring people for a different type of work.

"We're going to bring on about 800 workers to support the staffing for our operating plants," said Jeffrey Archie, the utility's chief nuclear officer.

SCE&G is not alone in looking for new employees for nuclear facilities. The Nuclear Energy Institute estimates that 39 percent of the nuclear workforce will hit retirement age by 2018, meaning the industry will have to hire 20,000 new workers over the next four years to replace the retirees.

More recently, that hiring has not shown up in jobs statistics. In the May jobs report out Friday, in which 217,000 jobs were created with the unemployment rate at 6.3 percent, the workforce at utilities remained essentially flat at 550,000 from April.

"We'll be looking for folks with a background in physics, engineers, maintenance workers, mechanical instrument and control technicians, electricians and also chemists," said Archie. He said 450 of the planned 800 staffers for the two new reactors have already been hired even though the first won't be online until late 2017 or early 2018.

"We were going to be doing a lot of training and instructing so we hired instructors first," said Archie, a 36-year veteran of the utility.

Once the instructors were certified on the new technology, the company brought in operators, he said. The operators are undergoing training now on a simulator that mimics the Westinghouse AP1000 reactors that

SCE&G is installing. The utility is also bringing in engineers and maintenance workers.

The Cayce, S.C.-based utility declined to say what it pays its new hires. The nonunion company said the pay is "competitive" with a full benefits package. The Nuclear Energy Institute said the median salary for an electrical technician at a nuclear plant is \$67,571, for a mechanical technician \$66,581 and for a reactor operator \$77,782.

To make sure the 800 positions are filled, SCE&G has been recruiting from within the industry, the military and from local high schools, two-year and four-year colleges. One of the schools its partnered with is Columbia, S.C.-based Midlands Technical College.

SCE&G approached the school in 2008 and asked Midlands to create a curriculum to train unlicensed nuclear operators. The utility would then hire from the pool to become licensed nuclear operators. Midlands agreed and launched the program in 2009, the same year that SCE&G broke ground on the the new reactors.

"Our foremost efforts at Midlands is to understand the needs of our customers in our region and then try to provide them with the skilled credentialed workforce that will get the job done," said Marshall "Sonny" White Jr., Midlands president.

"This is a wonderful opportunity with a two-year associate's degree to become a nuclear operator where you can have a job for life if you can keep yourself clean," he said.

Midlands itself recruits students from high schools, four-year colleges and underemployed adults or adults looking to make a career change. Right now, about 100 students are enrolled in the two-year program, and White said 85 to 90 percent of graduating classes have found jobs once they have graduated.

Wesley McQueen is one of them. The 25-year-old father of one with another baby on the way was a temporary state worker when he heard about the Midlands program, from which he graduated in May 2013.

"I really didn't know a whole lot about the nuclear industry at all, to be honest with you," said McQueen. "It was more or less an avenue to take to get my foot in the door of a good company."

McQueen was hired by SCE&G in September. He is a nuclear mechanic and will work on maintaining and fixing the pipes, valves, or whatever needs attention. He is in a two-year training program at the company, but it will be four or five years before he can work on his own without the oversight of a seasoned employee. Also, like others in the industry, he will be subject to ongoing training and testing to assure he is capable of working on the equipment.

Kimberly Hall, 37, hopes to be among the 800 hires. A native of Fairfield County where the reactors are located, she gave up her job in the drug industry to come to the Midlands nuclear training program.

"It's the process that you can take uranium and power an entire city," Hall said when asked why she switched.

With a master's degree in chemistry, Hall is in an accelerated program that allows her to finish Midlands program in a year. After that she has designs on becoming a reactor operator, the person who ensures the plant is powered the way it should be.

"We want folks who are eager to learn," said Archie, when asked what skills a future employee would need. "We invest a lot in training, so we want folks that will embrace training and by and large have a great work ethic and really appreciate what we are trying to do for our customers, which is to provide clean, safe reliable energy."

When the reactors are up and running they will each be able to power 640,000 homes, not to mention providing up to 800 people a chance at to power their careers.

