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Rep. Fleischmann To Host First House Nuclear Cleanup Caucus Meeting

WASHINGTON— The House Nuclear Cleanup Caucus, chaired by Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (TN-03) and Rep. Ben Lujan (NM-03), will be hosting its first meeting of the 114th Congress on Thursday, February 12th. The Cleanup Caucus is a bipartisan group supporting the largest environmental cleanup program in the world. The legacy of the Manhattan Project and the 50 years of government nuclear weapons development affects communities throughout our nation. The caucus' primary mission is to raise awareness of these issues throughout the halls of Congress and around the nation.

Date: Thursday, February 12, 2015

Time: 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM

Participants:

- Rep. Chuck Fleischmann
- Rep. Ben Lujan
- Mark Whitney, Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management
- Additional Members who represent cleanup sites

Media Availability: Media will have opportunity for question and answer at conclusion of program

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Location: 2226 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515

GOP senator pushes for more nuclear power, Yucca waste site

The Hill

February 5, 2015

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Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) said on Thursday that he'll use the Energy Appropriations panel to encourage new nuclear power plants and construction of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste site, among other nuclear priorities.

Alexander, who is now chairman of the Appropriations Committee panel with power over the Energy Department's budget, outlined a series of steps that he believes could boost the country's nuclear industry, stop plant closures and spur new development.

"Our Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, which I chair, will take a year-long look at all of this during 2015," Alexander said in a speech at the Nuclear Energy Institute, the industry's main lobbying group.

"Our committee will begin with oversight, expanded budget hearings in February and March. And then in April, we'll turn toward a series of hearings about the future of nuclear power in our country and what it would be like for the United States to be without it."

Alexander in 2009 called for the United States to build 100 new nuclear reactors, a plan even the industry thought might be too ambitious.

He isn't abandoning that plan, but he is focusing on policies that could help the industry in other ways.

The Yucca site, proposed in the 1980s but still never built, is one of his priorities. The permanent waste storage site has been proposed for Nevada, but it faces opposition in the state, the Obama administration and elsewhere.

"There's renewed hope under our Republican majority that we can solve the 25-year-old stalemate on what to do with waste from our

reactors, and Yucca Mountain can and should be part of the solution," Alexander said.

"To continue to oppose Yucca Mountain because of radiation concerns is to ignore science as well as the law."

His other top priorities included reexamining the regulatory regime for nuclear power, doubling the federal research dollars that go to nuclear power and encouraging energy diversity for utilities.

Alexander also took particular issue with the wind energy production tax credit, which was renewed for 2014 but is not currently law.

"We need to end policies that pick winners and losers in the marketplace certainly over the long term, the most conspicuous example of which is the wasteful wind production tax credit, which has now been in place for 22 years," Alexander said.

The Nuclear Energy Institute welcomed Alexander's ideas.

"His clarion call for policies to ensure that America can continue to depend on reliable, carbon-free nuclear energy comes at a perfect time," Alex Flint, the group's top lobbyist, said in a statement.

"As well as any leader has done in years, the senator effectively made the point that there is a lot at stake, and that the energy decisions we make today will shape our nation's future for generations to come."

The wind incentive also artificially makes coal and nuclear power less competitive, he said.

"Sometimes the Obama administration's national energy policy seems like a national windmill policy," Alexander said. "But that's not a sound plan for America's future."

Hanford Cleanup Board Asks For Health Analysis On Tank Vapors

February 4, 2015

KUOW.org

[LINK](#)

An advisory board wants the U.S. Department of Energy and its contractors to better analyze records on the health of Hanford tank farm workers.

The medical histories of radioactive cleanup workers should be examined more closely at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation.

That's likely to be the advice Thursday morning from a cleanup advisory board at the nuclear site in southeast Washington.

These workers are dealing with massive underground tanks stewing with 56 million gallons of radioactive sludge. Some are leaking.

And for years, workers have reported breathing chemical vapors on the job. Now even more workers are reporting headaches, dizziness and having to leave work to go to the doctor.

So the Hanford Advisory Board is asking the U.S. Department of Energy and its contractors to better analyze records on the health of tank farm workers. The board wants DOE to contact workers who were exposed to chemical vapors even as far back as 20 years ago, and see how their health is now.

DOE and its contractors have said they're getting better equipment to test the air and reduce inhalation problems.

Alexander: Congress may not OK UPF budget funds at requested levels, but says there's bipartisan support

February 5, 2015

Frank Munger's Atomic City Underground

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Michael Collins, the News Sentinel's Washington correspondent, talked with U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander this morning and filed a report on the senator's comments on the multi-billion-dollar Uranium Processing Facility at Y-12.

Here's the full Collins' report:

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander said Thursday there is strong bipartisan support in Congress for funding the proposed multibillion-dollar Uranium Processing Facility at the Y-12 National Security Complex, but the actual funding might be less than what the Obama administration is proposing.

"The uranium facility is the largest federal construction project in the United States," the Maryville Republican said. "Barring some sort of catastrophe, I would expect Congress to appropriate regularly several hundred million dollars a year for the next seven to 10 years until it's completed."

The administration is calling for spending \$430 million on the Uranium Processing Facility in the coming year as the project heads toward construction, according to the proposed budget the White House released last week. That's a significant jump from the current year's spending level of \$335 million.

Budget documents show annual funding for the facility would gradually increase in the coming years, jumping to \$525 million by 2020.

"The administration has recommended more spending than Congress is likely to approve across the board, so the number may be less than that," said Alexander, the new chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development.

Alexander said he expects the subcommittee to hold a series of hearings on the administration's proposed budget in February and March.

The exact funding level for the Uranium Processing Facility will depend on the outcome of those hearings and "how much the managers say they can properly spend," Alexander said.

"We want to make sure it's efficiently spent," he said.

The subcommittee also will hold oversight hearings to make sure the project stays within budget and that the facility is built on time, Alexander said.

The Uranium Processing Facility will replace a series of old production facilities, some of which date back to the nuclear weapons plant's work on the World War II Manhattan Project. The facility is projected to start operations in 2025 and to have a lifespan of 50 years.