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DOE's Second National Cleanup Workshop Set for Sept. 14-15 in the Washington, D.C. Area

DOE-EM

WASHINGTON, D.C. – [DOE](#), in cooperation with the [Energy Communities Alliance](#) and [Energy Facility Contractors Group](#), is set to hold the second DOE National Cleanup Workshop on Sept. 14-15, 2016, at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center in Alexandria, Va.

The workshop will bring together senior DOE executives, DOE site officials, industry executives, and other stakeholders to discuss [EM's](#) progress on the cleanup of the environmental legacy of the nation's Manhattan Project and Cold War nuclear weapons program.

More than 350 attendees, including senior Department officials, Congressional leaders, DOE contractors, and state, Tribal and local government leaders, [participated in the inaugural 2015 workshop](#) — the largest EM-focused gathering in the D.C. area last year.

More information on the DOE National Cleanup Workshop can be found [here](#).

As the largest environmental cleanup program in the world, EM is charged with the responsibility of cleaning 107 sites across the country, totaling a combined area equal to that of Rhode Island and Delaware.

September 2016

14-15

DOE National Cleanup
Workshop
Hilton Alexandria Mark
Center
Alexandria, VA
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Haley seeks lawsuit over unpaid fines from missed MOX deadline at Savannah River Site

Aiken Standard

January 27, 2016

[LINK](#)

S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley is looking to sue the U.S. Department of Energy because the agency has failed to acknowledge her attempt to levy \$1 million a day for a missed deadline at the Savannah River Site's MOX facility.

Haley sent a Jan. 26 letter to S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson asking him to "initiate litigation on behalf of the state of South Carolina against DOE."

Per a 2003 agreement signed by DOE and South Carolina, the federal agency was supposed to either remove 1 metric ton of weapons-grade plutonium from the state, or process it through the SRS Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility – the facility that is expected to convert 34 metric tons of the plutonium into commercial nuclear fuel.

Neither occurred, which means DOE owes the state \$1 million a day, which began Jan. 1.

The Department of Energy has yet to pay, which is why Haley is greenlighting a lawsuit.

"As you and I have discussed," Haley wrote to Wilson, "South Carolina will not idly stand by while DOE continues – in violation of federal law – to ignore its commitment to the people of South Carolina."

Haley's letter to Wilson follows a Jan. 19 letter she received from U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz.

In his letter, Moniz wrote that the Energy Department remains committed to South Carolina by suspending further transfers of defense plutonium intended for the MOX facility from other locations to the Savannah River Site.

The MOX facility is part of the SRS complex located in Aiken County. Furthermore, Moniz said another plan to downblend six metric tons of non-MOX plutonium at SRS is an “endorsement of the site’s current and future technical capabilities and skilled workforce.”

However, Haley viewed the kudos as another indictment against South Carolina, telling Wilson that Moniz’s response “not only ignores the \$1 million per day fine rightfully and statutorily due to South Carolina, it outlines its plan to send additional plutonium to the Savannah River Site.”

Haley’s attempt to sue follows a threat she made last month as the Jan. 1 deadline approached.

Despite efforts to levy the multimillion-dollar fine, the Department of Energy would first have to find available funding within its budget.

The Aiken Standard asked the agency earlier this year if it would seek additional funding from Congress to pay the fines. The agency only responded that it remains committed to South Carolina.

U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., among other South Carolina congressmen, applauded Haley’s threat to sue and has said she should use whatever litigation she can to hold the Department of Energy to its word.

Wilson added earlier this month that funding the MOX penalties could be solved with a line item shift in the budget.

The MOX project has been plagued with cost overruns and delays over the years. Moniz reported in June that it would cost \$1 billion a year to make significant progress.

Moniz is currently looking into a downblending alternative to the MOX project that would dilute the plutonium and send it to a repository.

He is expected to report his findings to President Barack Obama before the president rolls out his budget proposal Feb. 9.

Aiken Tech, SRNS announce nuclear certificate program

Augusta Chronicle

January 26, 2016

[LINK](#)

AIKEN — Savannah River Nuclear Solutions needs operators, and a new certificate program developed in collaboration with Aiken Technical College just might be the thing that will remedy workforce shortages in the greater Augusta area, officials said.

In a Tuesday news conference at Aiken Tech, both school officials and SRNS representatives introduced the Nuclear Fundamentals Certificate Program, a seven-course offering spanning two semesters (30 weeks) in what essentially serves as a crash course in the nuclear industry.

Gemma Frock, Aiken Tech's vice president of education and training, said students enrolled in the course will receive instruction in applied chemistry, process control, hydraulics and pneumatics, integrated physics and radiation fundamentals. The program, she said, was designed in "very deep collaboration" with Savannah River Site staff.

Upon graduation, newly certified operators can expect to earn a starting salary of about \$41,000, and SRNS CEO Carol Johnson said she already has plans to hire several hundred new operators for the next several years, and those who have earned the certificate will have a leg up on the competition.

“I would actually go out on a limb and say virtually anyone who comes through this program successfully and meets our entry requirements will have a good-paying job,” Johnson said. “Not only will they have a good-paying job, there are good benefits that come with that.”

Aiken Tech President Susan Winsor said the need for the program was born out of an aging workforce and the general lack of qualified candidates throughout the area. Johnson said staffing levels reached a critical low recently when there weren’t enough operators to complete tasks at SRS because of attrition.

Demand is such that classes for the new program will begin on Feb. 22.

“Because of the need at the Savannah River Site and with SRNS, we chose not to wait until the summer semester,” Frock said, adding that officials expect a group of about 15 students.

The program will cost Aiken County residents about \$2,100 in tuition per semester and isn’t eligible for federal student aid. Qualified students can, however, receive up to \$2,000 in grants each semester.

To enroll, visit www.atc.edu.

Advanced Nuclear Pioneers Assemble at Third Way Summit and Showcase

Bezinga

January 2016

[LINK](#)

Forum to Discuss a Path Forward for Advanced Nuclear Innovation
Washington, DC (PRWEB) January 27, 2016

Third Way, in partnership with the Idaho National Laboratory, Argonne National Laboratory and Oak Ridge National Laboratory, today hosted the first ever Advanced Nuclear Summit and Showcase.

The event brought together policymakers, innovators and investors who are developing advanced nuclear technology. Held at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., these experts participated in a series of panel discussions about the latest breakthroughs.

"The Advanced Nuclear Summit symbolizes the monumental progress that has been made over the last decade to develop affordable, reliable, safe, and clean advanced nuclear technology. If commercialized, advanced nuclear can strengthen our grid, help address climate, and maintain a robust domestic nuclear sector," said Josh Freed, Vice President for the Clean Energy Program.

Balancing climate concerns and the growing energy demands of the developing world is one of the great challenges of the 21st century.

"Advanced nuclear provides a path where we can both lift billions people around the world out of energy poverty and cut carbon emissions at the same time," said Rachel Pritzker, Founder and President of the Pritzker Innovation Fund, and Third Way Board Member.

In North America, 48 companies, backed by more than \$1.6 billion in private capital, represent a new sector for the research, development and design of advanced nuclear reactors. Several companies were on hand at the Showcase ([link to photos](#)) to share the latest news related to their projects.

Speakers noted the progress that has been made in recent years to increase the support, development and commercialization of advanced reactors on the part of Congress, the National Regulatory Commission, the Dept. of Energy and the White House.

In November 2015, the Obama administration announced its 2017 budget plan includes \$900 million in new funding to support the federal research, development and demonstration efforts in nuclear energy technologies.

Much of this work will be conducted under the U.S. Dept. of Energy Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear or GAIN initiative. The Idaho National Laboratory will serve as private industry's main point of access to federal experts and facilities.

"There are several different concepts and classes of advanced reactors being pursued and the GAIN initiative helps to create a thriving ecosystem for innovation that fosters private investment and activates the government's investment in our national labs," said Mark Peters, Idaho National Laboratory Director.

While these and other announcements illustrate the support around the technology, panelists acknowledged the great deal of work that needs to be done to provide a clear path forward for advanced nuclear innovation in the U.S.

"What the Advanced Nuclear Summit demonstrates is that there is a robust advanced nuclear sector being developed by private companies and research institutions," said Freed. "The next step, which Washington is already beginning to address in a rare bipartisan moment, is to modernize how the federal government supports private innovation and regulates new nuclear technologies."

Third Way is a think tank that answers America's challenges with modern ideas aimed at the center. It is comprised of Democrats and Independents who share the conviction that government plays an essential role in keeping the nation's promises – for equal opportunity, individual liberty, stewardship of resources and lasting security. It advocates for private-sector economic growth, a tough and smart centrist security strategy, a clean energy

revolution, and progress on divisive social issues, all through moderate-led U.S. politics.

Lawmakers talk state of nuclear energy in SC

Local 5 News

January 28, 2016

[LINK](#)

COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) –

Lawmakers from both the House and Senate met this morning to learn about the state of nuclear energy in South Carolina. Also they heard about just how extensive nuclear power is in the state.

Lawmakers from each district with a connection to nuclear energy heard just how many jobs, investments, and projects groups like SCANA, Duke Energy and Fluor provide in the Palmetto State each year.

There are five nuclear sites total in South Carolina, stretching from the H B Robinson Nuclear Plant in the Pee Dee, to the Savannah River Site on the other side of the state in Aiken County.

Dr. Terry Michalske, the Savannah River Site National Laboratory's director, informed lawmakers on the role the site and other South Carolina nuclear sites play in foreign policy and national defense. He said when the ground shakes in North Korea, he gets the phone call.

"We operate the world's only crime laboratory that can handle radiological materials. It's a 20 year partnership with the FBI. We actually house an FBI laboratory. You probably didn't know that," Dr. Michalske said.

Lawmakers expressed their support for nuclear energy, but they didn't bring up some issues like the MOX plant. The MOX plant is a federal energy project

that has been constantly delayed at Savannah River. It's a project that Governor Haley has threatened legal action over for the delay.

LANL to share in \$25 million grant for nuclear science, security

Santa Fe New Mexican

January 28, 2016

[LINK](#)

The National Nuclear Security Administration has awarded a \$25 million grant to a consortium of universities and national laboratories, including Los Alamos National Laboratory, for research and development of nuclear science and security, the U.S. Department of Energy announced Thursday.

The consortium, led by the University of California, Berkeley, includes seven other universities and five national labs. It seeks to link academic research with scientific development at the labs. This is the second time the University of California, Berkeley has received the grant.

The grant will be allocated in \$5 million annual increments. Research will focus on nuclear and particle physics and nuclear security policy, as well as other areas.

"Innovation and research in the fundamental sciences is needed to adapt to this dynamic yet enduring nonproliferation and nuclear security mission," NNSA official Anne Harrington said in a statement. "... I am confident that more basic research efforts in academia will complement the applied efforts of the national laboratories and industry in supporting the critically important national security goals of our country."

Washington state pushing for small-scale nuclear reactors

News 1130

January 27, 2016

[LINK](#)

OLYMPIA (NEWS 1130) – We don't have any of them on this side of the border but one politician in Washington State is pushing to bring in next-generation nuclear reactors to meet its power needs.

The US hasn't seen any nuclear power plants built since the 1970s but a new wave is being developed.

The technology itself is referred to as small modular reactors (SMRs).

"It's sort of a plug-and-play where you can take the individual modules and plug them in so you can increase your capacity depending upon the needs," says Sharon Brown, the Washington state senator who is spearheading the push.

The next generation reactors aren't quite ready for production but once they are, Brown says Washington wants them.

She says the Evergreen State would be ideally suited for them because of its atomic expertise when it comes to weapons testing.

The mother of five says the technology is much safer today.

"I like to say it's not your grandfather's nuclear. We've come so far, we've learned so many lessons from things like Three Mile Island the technology. So it would be great if people kept an open mind," says Brown.

But University of Toronto nuclear physicist Pekka Sinervo isn't about possible meltdowns or other accidents.

His main concern is what happens to the nuclear waste produced.

"It is fair to say that there is a fairly large legacy of nuclear waste already sitting at Hanford in Washington State. Those are very large waste repositories that need to be dealt with," says Sinervo.

The Hanford site represents two-thirds of the country's high-level radioactive waste by volume and is the most contaminated nuclear site in the United States.

Sinervo says no country has yet figured out how to properly store the waste long-term.

"What does one do with nuclear waste? Neither in the United States or Canada do we have solution which I would say I am comfortable with my children or grandchildren having to live with. In the US, I think they're even further away from a long-term solution for containing nuclear waste."

Washington's one working reactor at the Columbia Generating Station produces around 10 per cent of the state's electricity.

Senate approves first amendments to energy bill

The Hill

January 28, 2016

[LINK](#)

Senators on Thursday approved four amendments to an energy overhaul bill, the first of what will likely be several amendment votes while the energy bill is on the floor.

The legislation — the first energy rewrite in seven years — would change a host of policies, including provisions to speed up the export of liquefied natural gas, indefinitely expand a conservation fund, update the electricity grid and reform and update other energy policies.

Senators had offered 89 amendments to the legislation as of Thursday morning, Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairwoman Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) said. Several with bipartisan support are set to hit the floor for votes today.

“It is the beginning of a series of steps that we will take to modernize our nation’s energy, as well as our mineral policies,” Murkowski, a bill co-sponsor, said Thursday.

The first amendment, from Sens. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), would boost research into advanced nuclear reactor technology in the U.S. It passed on an 87-4 vote.

The amendment would establish modeling and simulation programs for reactor technology, set up user facilities and a “national innovation center” for research sharing and push to get the Nuclear Regulatory Commission more involved in reactor research.

“This bill is a strong signal to the rest of the world that we intend to maintain the U.S.’s leadership in nuclear technology,” Crapo said in a floor speech.

The Senate also approved, on a 62-29 vote, an amendment from Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) requiring a report on the impact of crude oil exports on U.S. consumers, refiners and shippers. Markey opposed lifting the ban on crude oil exports when lawmakers passed such a measure last year.