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US awards \$40m for research to support nuclear waste cleanup mission

[Energy Business Review](#)

July 20, 2016

The US Department of Energy (DOE) has awarded up to \$40m to four new energy frontier research centers (EFRCs) to expedite development of

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technologies required to support its environmental management and nuclear cleanup mission.

The four centers, which will be led by Florida State University, Ohio State University, the University of South Carolina and DOE's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, will aim to achieve fundamental advances in safe, efficient, and cost-effective waste cleanup and storage technologies.

Funded by DOE's Office of Science, the EFRCs will work with DOE's Office of Environmental Management, which is responsible for the DOE's cleanup mission.

A basic research will be carried out by the centers to assist with the cleanup of hazardous waste which has piled up due to decades of nuclear weapons research and production during the 20th century. The clean up mission is estimated to take decades to complete.

US Energy Secretary Moniz said: "The four new EFRCs announced today lay the foundation for continuing success in our environmental cleanup efforts, which depend upon advances in innovative science and research technologies.

"As one of America's most successful use-inspired basic research initiatives, the EFRC program can be counted on to further discoveries that will greatly enhance cleanup efforts and accomplish one of DOE's core missions."

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) will lead one center known as Interfacial Dynamics in Radioactive Environments and Materials (IDREAM), which will assess the impact of radiation on the nuclear waste composition in the years to come.

The work will be carried by PNNL together with Washington State University, University of Washington, Georgia Institute of Technology,

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September 2016

14

**Save the Date:
House Nuclear
Cleanup Caucus
Capitol Hill**

November 2016

16-18

**INVITATION ONLY
Save the Date: 2016
Intergovernmental
Meeting
New Orleans, LA**

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University of Notre Dame, City College of New York and Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Washington State University chemistry associate professor and the new center deputy director Aurora Clark said: “It is going to take 40 or 50 years before we are able to process the waste being stored at sites like Hanford.

“Because the waste is highly radioactive, it will evolve over that time and we must predict these changes in advance to design effective methods for remediation and safe disposal.”

Each of the centers will receive awards from \$2m to \$4m annually for up to four fiscal years.

WCS Submits Supplemental Information

[The Rod Report](#)

July 20, 2016

In last week’s blog post, I laid out the timeline for our response to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s (NRC) Request for Supplemental Information (RFI). I am happy to report that we submitted our response today, as promised. In fact, we answered a few more items than we expected when we communicated our schedule to NRC earlier this month.

I’ve also gotten a question about why we say the license application is for 40,000 Metric Tons of Uranium (MTU) when we analyzed 5,000 MTU of spent nuclear fuel from 12 shutdown or decommissioned nuclear reactors located across the country. The 40,000 MTU is the entire size of our facility and will be used to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The 5,000 MTU is the size of Phase 1 of the facility and is addressed in the Safety Analysis Report (SAR).

In the license application, WCS is requesting authorization for up to 5,000 MTU in dry cask storage systems that currently have Safety Analysis Report revisions and amendments that have already been approved by the NRC. This was something that NRC asked we clarify, so we will be revising License Conditions and Technical Specifications as necessary to ensure such restrictions apply.

The only storage systems we seek to use in this license are those which already were reviewed and approved by the NRC prior to our application for a storage license. The objective is to use proven storage processes and secure a license that will allow WCS to address the immediate interim storage needs.

WCS is also requesting that the NRC initiate the process of preparing its EIS as soon as possible. It's no secret to all interested parties that obtaining an EIS is a lengthy process. We want a thorough NEPA review and, in light of the high level of interest from stakeholders and the public, we believe that process should start sooner rather than later.

And speaking of stakeholders, we also learned a valuable lesson with this request for information from the NRC. While we went to work right away to get the information the NRC sought, we didn't communicate that to the public. That was an oversight on our part, and one we won't make again. All formal communications with the NRC regarding this license application will be made public as we work through this process.

We will respect the NRC process and allow them to steer the timeline for posting it for the public, but I want to provide you real time information on key components of our response.

We hope that clarifying key aspects of the application and improving our communications to the public will be two significant steps that will help reassure the public and get us a step closer to making interim storage a reality.

Westinghouse awarded contract to remove radioactive waste from tanks at Savannah River Site

[The Augusta Chronicle](#)

July 21, 2016

Westinghouse Electric Co., has been awarded a contract to help in the removal of radioactive waste from underground storage tanks at Savannah River Site.

The Cranberry Township, Pa.-based company is being contracted by Savannah River Remediation, the site's liquid waste contractor. The contract is for \$12.4 million, and the new process is expected to be operational in late spring 2018.

According to Savannah River Remediation, the contract for tank closure cesium removal is designed to enhance the efforts to get rid of the radioactive bulk waste.

In January, Savannah River Remediation received commercial supplier proposals for the procurement of the equipment needed for the cesium removal technology demonstration at the Site's Tank 10. The technology selected is an ion exchange process with an "at-tank" deployment. Commercial vendors have demonstrated success with cesium removal, using ion exchange, from similar type wastes.

"We are pleased and excited to have the opportunity to demonstrate a new technology for the processing and cleanup of our high-level waste," said Tom Foster, SRR president and project manager, in a news release. "If successful, it may provide an opportunity to supplement the cleanup capability currently provided by our existing salt processing facilities and the future operation of the Salt Waste Processing Facility."
