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**U.S. Senator Alexander of Tennessee says nuclear power is best**

*WGNS News Radio*

September 15, 2016

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Meeting with DOE in  
New Orleans, LA

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At the first of two planned oversight hearings on the future of nuclear power U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander, (R-Tenn.), who leads the Senate appropriations subcommittee overseeing federal energy and water funding, said today that nuclear power is the "nation's best

source of low-cost, reliable, safe, and pollution-free electricity" and that Congress should take four specific steps to ensure its future development: replacing or safely extending the use of some current reactors, solving the nuclear waste stalemate, doubling funding for basic energy research, and ending wasteful subsidies for mature technologies.

"The United States uses about 25 percent of all electricity in the world to power our industries, our computers, our homes and most everything else we depend upon. Our 100 nuclear reactors provide about 20 percent of that electricity - which doesn't turn on or off when the wind blows or the sun shines and is available 90 percent of the time. It is cheap, reliable and safe. At a time when the science academies of 20 developed countries and many Americans say climate change is a threat - and that humans are a significant cause of that threat - nuclear power provides about 60 percent of our country's carbon-free electricity. It is our nation's best source of low-cost, reliable, safe and pollution-free electricity, and it must be part of our energy future."

Alexander detailed the four steps the U.S. should take to secure the future of nuclear power at the Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee hearing.

**On building more U.S. nuclear reactors:** "I have suggested we build 100 new nuclear reactors in the United States. The Center for Strategic and International Studies has said up to 25 of our 100 nuclear reactors could close by 2020. Add to this a projection by the U.S. Energy Information Administration that about 20 percent of our current capacity from coal is scheduled to go offline over the same period. If that were replaced entirely by nuclear power it would require building



another 48 new, 1,250-megawatt reactors - which would reduce our carbon emissions from electricity by another 14 percent."

**On solving the nuclear waste stalemate:** "We need to end the stalemate over what to do with our country's nuclear waste," Alexander said. "At a time when everyone wants to produce more carbon-free electricity it makes no sense whatsoever to undermine nuclear power by not opening Yucca Mountain to dispose of used nuclear fuel and moving forward with the pilot program Senator Feinstein and I have proposed to develop consolidated storage sites for used nuclear fuel."

**On doubling basic energy research:** "Basic energy research is one of the most important things the country can do to help unleash our free enterprise system to provide the clean, cheap, reliable energy we need to power our 21st-century economy, create good jobs, and keep America competitive in a global economy. Doubling basic research could help us find a commercially viable way to capture and reuse carbon, or develop small modular reactors and advanced reactors, which are smaller and require less water to operate."

**On ending subsidies that pick winners and losers and make nuclear more expensive:** "Washington has a bad habit of picking winners and losers - the most conspicuous example is the wasteful wind production tax credit. Last year's extension, for 2015, cost taxpayers about \$6 billion enough to double basic energy research at the Department of Energy."

Alexander asked the hearing witnesses - U.S Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz, former Sen. Judd Gregg, who is the Leadership Chair of Nuclear Matters, and Jay Faison, who is the CEO and Founder of the ClearPath Foundation - for input on how Congress can support nuclear power and address the challenges it faces.

[>>View article here](#)

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**Paducah leaders urge DOE for 10-year cleanup contract**

## WPSD Local 6

September 15, 2016



WASHINGTON - The gaseous diffusion plant in Paducah played an important role for more than 60 years from fighting the cold war to enriching uranium. Now, the focus is on cleaning up the site.

There are more than 1,200 employees currently doing the decontamination and decommissioning. That number could increase for the next cleanup contract cycle, which our leaders hope to be for a longer term. But it's also a wish for business owners who rely on the workforce to keep them open.

Business has not always been as usual for Kenny Forthman. When word of plant layoffs reached his grocery store, he wasn't sure what to expect.

"Everybody got nervous about it, because they were thinking, 'Is it going to affect our business?'" Forthman says. He says business slowed down, but it didn't do him in.

Three years later, and with the creation of the cleanup jobs, his registers are ringing with activity.

"Electric bill is not going to go down. Our expenses aren't going to go down. But we lose customers, our income is going to go down," Forthman says.

And that's not what Paducah city leaders want to see.

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## SRS tank begins receiving salt solution

*The Augusta Chronicle*

September 17, 2016



One of the two newly constructed tanks for Savannah River Site's radioactive liquid waste program has begun receiving decontaminated salt solution.

Savannah River Remediation, the liquid waste contractor at SRS, began transferring the salt solution to one of the two 60,000-gallon Salt Solution Receipt Tanks earlier this month.

The tanks are designed to improve the salt disposition process and prepare the site's liquid waste program for the Salt Waste Processing Facility, which is undergoing testing.

While one tank is being used, the other won't be needed until waste processing operations begin, scheduled for late 2018, according to the Department of Energy. Both tanks have passed inspections, a department news release stated.

DOE-Savannah River Manager Jack Craig said the tanks are another key step in preparing for the operation of the Salt Waste Processing Facility.

"There are many steps we have to take to ensure we are ready for SWPF start-up," Craig said. "These receipt tanks are unique and will provide us capacity to handle a higher flow of (the salt solution)."

The tanks receive the salt solution from a million-gallon feed tank with salt waste that has come from the Actinide Removal Process/Modular Caustic Side Solvent Extraction Unit. The solution is then turned into a grout mixture and permanently disposed of in Saltstone Disposal Units.

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**Savannah River Site picks team for plutonium cleanup effort**

## *The Augusta Chronicle*

September 10, 2016



Savannah River Site has selected a handpicked “Dream Team” to take on what it calls one of its riskier environmental cleanup activities.

The 18-member crew will assist in cleanup of the inactive Plutonium Fuel Form facility. This project is entering its second year.

The crew was chosen primarily for their experience in handling radioactive materials, most of which came during the SRS transuranic waste campaign, according to the site. TRU

waste typically consists of protective clothing, tools, rags, equipment and miscellaneous items contaminated with small amounts of plutonium.

The team has been able to remove and control fixed combustibles, upgrade the fire detection system and de-energize unneeded electrical circuits. It is also draining and cleaning shield cell windows after their partial disassembly, installing lighting and mechanically isolating the cells to aid removal of materials from the cells and support material characterization, the site stated in a news release.

“We knew that we would be facing a lot of unknown challenges, and we needed a team who could handle them,” said Jeff Hasty, a risk reduction manager. “In my 29 years of experience, this is the only handpicked crew I have seen.”

The Plutonium Fuel Form facility was used to make spheres and pellets out of plutonium that served as the heat source in radiolytic thermal generators used to electrically power deep space missions. The work left behind about 1,500 grams of plutonium. In its release, SRS notes the challenges in clean-up because of tight spaces with limited accessibility and very fine plutonium particulate dust that is

easily disturbed. The biggest health threat is from inhalation, so workers must work carefully to not stir up the dust, according to the release.

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## It's time to go nuclear

*Idaho State Journal*

September 16, 2016



Nuclear energy is our nation's largest source of emissions-free electricity, providing more than 60 percent of our zero-carbon power. And yet, in the U.S., only four reactors are under construction. It is not concern over safety or even waste storage that is the primary reason so few large plants are under construction. Rather, it's cost.

Constructing large nuclear plants is expensive. Conventional nuclear plants may cost at least six times what a similar-sized natural gas plant costs and take three to four times as long to site and complete. In this country and Europe, new nuclear plants are incurring cost overruns and delays. But cost overruns and delays on major oil and natural gas projects are also commonplace.

A recent Chevron study of major oil and gas projects undertaken between 2007 and 2010 found that only 8 percent of them came in on time and on budget. These huge projects, such as deep-water wells, are often one of a kind and are simply too complex and difficult to properly manage. The oil and gas industry got the

message. Instead of investing in these huge projects, more often capital is being spent on drilling in shale, where new wells cost a few million dollars instead of a few billion. Smaller, it turns out, makes a lot more sense.

With shale drilling, companies use the same techniques over and over again and apply lessons from one well to the next. They are able to develop technical expertise and perfect what they do. Since 2014, oil production from a new well in Texas' Permian Basin has jumped from 200 to 500 barrels a day, while production costs per barrel have dropped by as much as 40 percent. In less than a decade, shale drillers have turned the U.S. into the world's largest producer of oil and natural gas.

Is there a lesson here for the nuclear industry? Absolutely. It's time to go small.

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