

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Priorities

During a public meeting of the Idaho Cleanup Project (ICP) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) on Thursday, February 22, 2024, Mr. Schyler Walker briefed the CAB on the proposed budget priorities for Department of Energy (DOE) Idaho Operations Fiscal Year 2026.

The CAB has reviewed the information provided by Mr. Walker and strongly recommends that DOE-Environmental Management support fully funding the list of priorities below.

We had a full discussion of this listing of proposed budget priorities. Each priority addresses the need for protection of the Snake River Plain Aquifer to ensure the safety and health of the stakeholders in Idaho:

- Solidify liquid waste stored over the aquifer
- Remove all stored transuranic waste from above the aquifer
- Manage high-level waste and spent nuclear fuel for eventual disposal
- Dismantlement & Demolition (D&D) of Radioactive Waste Management Complex (RWMC) facilities.
- Expand the Idaho Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) Disposal Facility (ICDF)
- Cap the Subsurface Disposal Area (SDA)

Members of the CAB reviewed the priorities in terms of relative risk to the environment and the above listing of budget priorities is consistent with our views.

In addition to the priorities listed above, of critical importance to the board is the research being done related to Calcine Technology Validation. The CAB suggests that this remain a priority for the department.

Beyond the central analysis connected to environmental risk, there is also the ongoing need to meet the requirements of the 1995 Settlement Agreement between the State of Idaho, the U.S. Navy, and the U.S. Department of Energy. CAB members are very aware of the significance of the required dates and milestones, including the extra challenge this imposes on INL management for the efficient deployment of scarce resources.

In particular, the CAB recognizes the need for funding of ongoing maintenance of storage systems at the site and, most importantly, the urgent need for completion of the disposal path -- including nearer term decision making on waste packaging -- so this waste has a long-term repository.

We appreciate the multiple opportunities to receive background information on the budget process of the Department and the Federal Government. We understand that the Department does value our informed input and we appreciate that. We also appreciate Mr. Walker's availability to answer our many questions during our meeting.