

## Private ISF

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**From:** Beatrice Brailsford <bbrailsford@snakeriveralliance.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 27, 2017 8:57 PM  
**To:** PrivateISF  
**Subject:** Response to RFI on Private Initiatives to Develop Consolidated SNF Storage Facilities  
**Attachments:** comments on RFI for PI SNF.pdf

Best,

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January 27, 2017

To: Andrew Griffith, DOE Office of Nuclear Energy  
From: Beatrice Brailsford, Nuclear program director  
Re: Request for information (RFI) for private initiatives (PIs) for consolidated spent fuel storage

The Snake River Alliance is Idaho's grassroots nuclear watchdog and clean energy advocate. We were founded in 1979 and have focused on nuclear weapons, waste, and power issues and policies throughout our history. Many of our concerns center on the Idaho National Laboratory (INL), but we recognize the national context that has affected the Site and residents of the State of Idaho. The Alliance was a founding member of the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, and we fully support ANA's response to DOE's current RFI. I submit these comments on behalf of our dues-paying members. I have not attempted to answer the twelve questions directly.

Key to solving the nuclear waste problem is to focus on solving the nuclear waste problem rather than on trying to respond to the difficulties and dilemmas of the nuclear power industry.

The Alliance opposes the consolidation of spent nuclear fuel at non-reactor sites. Instead, nuclear waste should be stored as safely as possible as close to its point of generation as possible until a permanent repository is available. If nuclear waste is moved, it is at least as likely as not that it will never move again. Spent fuel has been coming to Idaho since shortly after INL's founding. None has left. Attempting to consolidate spent nuclear fuel away from reactors will add environmental and economic costs and increase programmatic uncertainties over time.

The Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future recommended an integrated national nuclear waste management system. The DOE took that to mean an itinerary and schedule for spent fuel shipments away from production sites. Ever since, we've seen proposals and plans that are supported by absolutely no legal framework. The DOE should abandon efforts to map a shipping schedule that is contrary to law. (Further, I suggest that those who serve the public interest in the federal government consider carefully the construction "*current law.*") Instead, the DOE should work with Congress to implement the establishment of a new agency to oversee, not just shipments, but an entire nuclear waste management system.

No plan can go forward that is based on the federal government taking premature title to commercial spent fuel.

High-level waste is among the most radioactive wastes. Nearly all the high-level waste in the United States was produced during nuclear weapons production. Is the DOE actually considering storing dangerous nuclear weapons waste in an above-ground commercial facility?

Any effort to go forward with the current consolidation plan must be preceded by an in-depth economic analysis. The analysis must include all costs of current storage and compare those costs to the costs of preparing to ship to a reactor site and to a non-reactor site, shipping, storage for the duration of any contract, costs of

extending the contracts, eventual shipments to a permanent repository, etc. There must be a contingency fund for any potential problems, the most likely of which is failure to remove the spent fuel as promised. Who will *in fact* meet these financial obligations? The federal government does not own commercial fuel.

Any effort to consolidate spent nuclear fuel must be based on free, prior, and informed consent of the affected communities, Native American nations, and states. The DOE cannot explore, let alone implement, the PI concept in a fair, open and transparent manner. It has historically met strong public resistance and is against the law.

I initially noted the Snake River Alliance's support for ANA's comments on this RFI. I repeat an important part of their recommendation. The DOE should

- \* publish all of the submissions to the RFI (as it has promised to do in 81 FR 74780- October 27, 2016),
- \* respond publicly to all of the submissions, and
- \* terminate its process to encourage private initiatives for consolidated SNF storage facilities. Thus, the proposed "presentations" by respondents to this RFI at DOE Headquarters should not occur. If DOE does proceed with this idea, all respondents, including the Snake River Alliance, should be invited and allowed to make such presentations, if they so desire. The Alliance requests to make such a presentation, if any other presentations are invited or allowed.