



Funding for Idaho Cleanup Project Completion

The Idaho National Laboratory (INL) Site Environmental Management (EM) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) has been closely following the funding situation within EM and the Department of Energy (DOE) as it has been developing over the last several months. We recognize that significant challenges exist in trying to balance the competing priorities and risks while working to complete the DOE-EM mission. As members of the INL Site EM CAB and citizens of Idaho, we have an informed interest in supporting the work at INL and bringing it to completion on schedule. We also believe we have a responsibility as taxpayers to assure that public funds are spent appropriately and consistent with national priorities.

The INL is unique among the larger DOE sites in that we are within real striking distance of completing the major portion of the clean-up mission on-site. This is very significant for DOE's commitment to its clean-up goal, and this momentum should not be lost. Therefore, we are recommending a funding level that would allow DOE-ID to bring expeditious closure to site clean-up by performing work which is already planned using facilities that are ready for operation. We feel this course is in the best interests of DOE, the citizens of Idaho, and the entire country.

We note that State leaders have also come to this same conclusion. Governor Otter, after a recent visit to INL, was quite complimentary of DOE-EM work at the Site. However, he continues to maintain that safety and the environment are non-negotiable terms for the State of Idaho, and that funds for clean-up must continue, particularly for exhumation of buried waste.

The industry trade publication, Weapons Complex Monitor, recently observed that due to the ongoing technical problems at the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant, it might be in the best interest of the complex to re-program some funds to concentrate on other risk-based projects that could be completed in the shorter term and continue DOE's momentum toward clean-up and site closures.

Among the projects identified by the Weapons Complex Monitor was the Idaho Cleanup Project (ICP). The Weapons Complex Monitor stated that with approximately an additional \$30 million a year increase in funding, INL could complete the project by 2017. Completion by that date would leave only the high-level waste calcine to be dispositioned.

Additional funding of the ICP would also have significant benefits to the Department.

- INL has been for some time, and will continue to remain the major shipping source of waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). Additional funding of the ICP would insure a stable, longer-term source of clean-up waste to WIPP to help keep the WIPP pipeline operating at high efficiency.
- It would allow the Department to demonstrate its commitment to completion of Idaho Settlement Agreement milestones and stand as a success story for the DOE-EM Program.

The INL Site EM CAB has been pleased with the progress of both the ICP contractor and the DOE-ID federal staff in executing the cleanup program at INL. We believe continued progress is an expectation shared by the large majority of the citizens of Idaho. We are confident that any additional funds sent to the ICP will be efficiently used and will result in real, measurable clean-up and risk reduction. The performance record of the ICP bears this out. As noted in the Governor's Leadership in Nuclear Energy

(LINE) Commission report, 959 of 964 clean-up milestones have been met on time, and thousands of shipments of nuclear waste buried at the site have been sent for disposal.

For these reasons, we recommend a \$30 million annual increase in ICP budget. This amount of funding would allow:

- Completion of exhumation work and final capping at the Radioactive Waste Management Complex
- High-Level Waste Tank Farm closure and final capping at the Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center
- Completion of the Experimental Breeder Reactor-II decontamination and decommissioning at the Materials and Fuels Complex.

We look forward to your response to this recommendation. We sincerely appreciate your consideration and commitment to DOE's cleanup mission and this opportunity to provide you with the views of the INL Site EM CAB on this important work.