MINUTES

HOUSE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 10, 2014

TIME: 1:30 PM or Upon Adjournment

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman Raybould, Vice Chairman Eskridge, Representative(s) Anderson(1), Hartgen, Vander Woude, DeMordaunt, Nielsen, Thompson, Anderson(31), Anderst, Mendive, Monks, Morse, Trujillo, Smith, Rusche, Woodings

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Representative(s) Anderson(1), Hartgen, Vander Woude, Nielsen, Rusche

GUESTS: Brian Parker, Snake River Alliance; Liz Woodruff, SRA; John J. Williams, BPA; Don Hudson, Lincoln Co.

Chairman Raybould called the meeting to order at 3:12 p.m.

Brian Whitlock, Director of the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) State Government Relations, introduced INL Deputy Director, **Dr. Todd Allen** and **Rick Provencher**, the Idaho Operations Office Manager for the Department of Energy who would present to the committee.

Dr. Todd Allen began his presentation with a virtual tour of the INL campus and facilities which detailed the complex, new structures, and the various functions of the INL. He then discussed the new modernizations out at the desert nuclear research facilities and the major changes there which included; the Radiation experiment assembly facility, the Irradiated Materials Characterization Lab, the Stress Corrosion cracking research facility, and the Transient Reactor Test (TREAT) Facility. He stated these advances in systems and technology have allowed for additional nuclear research such as advanced nuclear fuels research and the MOOSE or the Multi-Object Orientation Simulation Environment which is a modeling system that allows scientist to solve complex problems without having to understand extremely detailed computer programing.

Dr. Allen then discussed the INL commercial support for Small Modular Reactor (SMR) design and development. He explained that the Department of Energy (DOE) is also aiding companies in the effort to build modules for markets to help with the rising costs of energy. The various companies he mentioned that are currently working with the INL included, B&W's mPower Heat Transfer/Licensing, NuScale Heat Transfer, Holtec Design studies, X Energy Economic analysis and he added commercial advanced reactor support for TerraPower Waste-Reducing design.

Dr. Allen also explained to the committee the involvement of the INL in National and Homeland Security research. He said the INL has strong programs including the Wireless Test Bed National User Facility, the radiological emergency training, and armor development which make the INL unique for research in the field.

Dr. Allen concluded by discussing the INL new central campus. He discussed the new facilities which include the Energy Innovation Laboratory (EIL) which houses the EIN event center and the nuclear control room modernization, the Energy Systems Laboratory which houses advanced battery research and biofuels feedstock processing, the Center for Advanced Energy Studies (CAES) which allows for extensive partnership with Idaho's research universities, the computer assisted virtual environment, additional nuclear research, and the fuel efficiency demonstrator.

Lastly, **Dr. Allen** stated the INL has vast and unique physical opportunities but the successes of the Lab really depends on the workers and scientists behind the equipment to make the projects work.

In response to questions regarding the viability of SMR's, **Dr. Allen** stated the development of the SMR initiative is at a critical state. He said there is a lot of hope but there are still a lot of hurdles that must be overcome. He explained the DOE has chosen two companies and is currently in process of helping them through the licensing process that must be completed before they can begin to build prototypes. He stated that however, there must be customers to build a successful project. He said the next year or so will be really telling for the industry and where it will go. He added with the current low cost of producing and selling natural gas the timing of the SMR industry will be crucial to its success. He also mentioned the success of the industry may also be regionally dependent.

In response to questions regarding funding, **Dr. Allen** stated they received an increase in funding between 2005 and 2010 and then between 2010 and 2013 saw a drastic decrease. He said this last year there has been a rise in funding and it seems to be stabilizing but there was a very quick rise, a very quick drop and now they are having to deal with those ramifications. He explained they lost 20% of their staff during the decline in funding but are now in the process of hiring approximately 100 positions.

Rick Provencher began by stating there is a strong remaining commitment to the cleanup efforts and a desire to meet the Idaho Settlement Agreement. He first briefed the committee on the DOE support for the SMR design certification and licensing. He stated they are highly invested in the cost sharing program to accelerate commercial SMR development through financial assistance for design engineering, testing, certification, and licensing of promising SMR technologies with high likelihood of being deployed at domestic sites. He said they are also exploring additional mechanisms for SMR fleet deployment.

Mr. Provencher then gave an update on the status of the Idaho Settlement Agreement. He began with the processing of liquid waste and stated the goal is to treat the remaining approximately 900,000 gallons by December 31, 2014. He said they are currently undergoing readiness evaluations which, once approved, will allow for the completion of that aspect of the cleanup. Next he discussed the calcine disposition and the commitment to make the calcine road-ready for disposition or storage outside Idaho by 2035. He said the reason for the extended deadline is that there is no potential ground water contamination from this stable solid waste. He said there is currently a treatment plan in the works and a facility in the design process to handle the material. With regard to the spent nuclear fuel (SNF) management commitment, Mr. Provencher stated there is an immediate requirement to comply with a milestone to have all SNF in dry storage by December 31, 2023 and then to have the SNF repackaged and shipped out of state by 2035. Lastly, with regard to the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project (AMWTP) and Remote Handled Transuranic Waste Project (RH-TRU), Mr. Provencher stated there is the goal to process and ship the legacy TRU by December 31, 2018. He said they are approximately 80% complete with above ground shipments having shipped 52,000m3 of the 65,000m3. He said the exhumation of 5.69 acres of buried waste is 55% complete having exhumed 5,881m3 so far and of that has shipped 5,710m3. He said this project has been hugely successful. He also added that there is potential to use these facilities to treat other wastes and process other material once these projects are completed to bring revenues. Lastly, Mr. Proovencer discussed the various assets of the Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center (INTEC).

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

Representative Raybould
Chair

Kaela Becklund
Secretary