

MINUTES

HOUSE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 10, 2021

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman Ehardt, Vice Chairman Wisniewski, Representatives Vander Woude, Horman, Scott, Amador, Armstrong, Furniss, Hartgen, Lickley, Young, Adams, Yamamoto, Chew (Colwell), Necochea, Nash

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

GUESTS: Lynn Tominaga, IGWA

Chairman Ehardt called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Yamamoto** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2021 meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 28494: **Rep. Blanksma** presented **RS 28494**. This legislation creates an Idaho Broadband Advisory Board and establishes the Idaho Broadband Fund.

MOTION: **Rep. Horman** made a motion to introduce **RS 28494**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

John Wagner, Director of the Idaho National Laboratory presented research and innovation happening at the Laboratory. INL is one of 17 Department of Energy National Laboratories, it has 889 square miles, its own rail system, 7 substations, and 4 operating reactors. The increasing budget and legislation shows strong bipartisan support for nuclear energy. Mr. Wagner explained three types of reactors that INL works with, Existing Nuclear Reactors, Small Modular Reactors, and Microreactors. INL believes that the Microreactors will have high demand in the future. They are working to make nuclear plants work efficiently and more cost effective. Traditionally nuclear plants only provide electricity, but INL is working towards desalination and clean water, hydrogen hydrolysis and creating heat. INL is currently working on Hydrogen Hydrolysis which will be retrofitted to existing nuclear plants. Currently nuclear power is providing 20% of the nations electricity.

Mr. Wagner explained to the committee that companies decide where to do their nuclear projects based on: where the power needs are, the cost to do the project in that area, the infrastructure to support the project, the communities attitude towards the project, and if an environmental assessment has already been done in that area. Idaho benefits from INL's work because they are contributing to the future energy systems and the national security aspects of this nation. They are also the seventh largest employer in the state. In the global market INL's competition is Russia and China. There are more reactors being built in China than anywhere else. He shared that Poland, Czeck Republic, Middle East, Africa, Eastern Europe, and any areas around the globe that don't have natural resources for power are interested in nuclear reactors.

Mr. Wagner further clarified to the committee that when INL requests federal budget money they are going up against national security objectives, renewable and fossil energy, and environment management for DOE budget allocations. As a nation more money is being put into the Energy, Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) budget than in nuclear budgets. He did emphasize that money spent in the U.S. provides more national security than when nuclear technology from other countries is deployed around the world. He also pointed out that when a reactor is sold to another country, it builds relationships that last the life of the reactor which is from 60-80 years. In answer to committee concerns, Mr. Wagner explained that the previous administration's policies forced Terra Power to disentangle with China. DOE picked Terra Power for the advanced reactor demonstration program, but INL did decide to team with them on their proposals to the DOE during a time when they were not entangled with China. Current conditions for federal funding require them to be U.S. owned and operated, and DOE screens them for national security reasons.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Representative Ehardt
Chair

Maggie Price
Secretary