

MINUTES

# HOUSE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

**DATE:** Thursday, January 26, 2023

**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room EW41

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Barbieri, Vice Chairman Furniss, Representatives Vander Woude, Horman, Scott, Young, Wisniewski, Raybould, Allgood, Bundy, Lambert, Mickelsen (Coletti), Redman, Wheeler, Chew, Necochea, Rubel

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Representatives Wisniewski, Bundy, Rubel

**GUESTS:** The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

**Chairman Barbieri** called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Redman** made a motion to approve the minutes from January 24, 2023.  
**Motion carried by voice vote.**

**John Wagner**, Director of the Idaho National Laboratory [INL], presented to the Committee. Director Wagner explained the Idaho National Laboratory is responsible for high-complexity, multi-disciplinary research and development. He stated the mission of INL is to achieve energy security, on critical infrastructure, physical and cyber security. He noted the transition to cleaner, non-carbon electricity is an important part of INL's work. Director Wagner explained the INL site with facilities enabling energy and security and research and development on a large scale. He stated that over the last five years INL has grown by 40%. He stated there is strong bipartisan support in Washington, D.C. for INL. Director Wagner stated that 52 reactors have been demonstrated on the site, but no new reactors have been demonstrated since the early 1970s. Director Wagner stated that INL is re-establishing US leadership in advanced nuclear technologies. He noted that different sized nuclear systems would work with wind, solar and hydro to provide things beyond electricity for industrial processes. He stated that redirection of surplus energy to value products was important, noting the importance of hydrogen to the future of energy.

**Director Wagner** went on to explain the security and resilience of critical infrastructure. He noted armor protection of transformers can guarantee power is protected from physical attack. He advised the Committee of the importance of including cyber-security in the design of software. He noted INL's work with the Department of Homeland Security to provide cyber security training for private sector and agency employees.

In response to questions from the Committee, **Director Wagner** explained the safety and security of nuclear systems is paramount. He noted that guaranteeing the safety and security of systems over decades has led to INL's provision of training today. Director Wagner addressed grid resiliency, and explained INL has developed systems to restore power to areas affected by grid disruption. He noted that severe weather incidents have been a new challenge for system resilience, noting the disruption caused by a cold snap in Texas. Director Wagner stated a number of advanced reactors use a different level of uranium enrichment than the current reactors use, and the only country producing this uranium is Russia. He noted that Russia's actions have made them a poor option for uranium, stating that Russia has weaponized energy. He stated there is a correlation between energy security and national security. Director Wagner noted the urgency of re-establishing uranium development capability to secure the nuclear energy portfolio.

Director Wagner noted the positive economic impact of INL, with INL employing 5,700 people and engaging with local contractors. He noted the economic impact in the region has increased by 35% to \$3.4 billion. He stated the large economic impact of the increased activity at the INL site. Director Wagner noted a positive relationship with the Department of Environmental Quality with regards to the operation of the site. Director Wagner noted that INL employed 500 interns each year. He advised the committee of the difficulty faced in employing and retaining cyber-security staff. He noted that an additional 3,000 jobs are expected to be created at INL over the next five years, and this figure did not include the high volume of construction workers that will also be needed in the future. He noted INL's work with local education institutions in accreditation of qualifications.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

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Representative Barbieri  
Chair

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Jeremy Collier  
Secretary