



Sustainable Fuel Cycle TASK FORCE

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Sustainable Fuel Cycle Task Force Science Panel

March 17, 2014

Secretary Ernest Moniz
Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Moniz,

As concerned scientists, we are writing to urge you to take a more active role in moving the Federal government forward to meet its moral and legal responsibilities concerning high level nuclear waste.

Collectively our Panel members have invested several hundred years of scientific effort to provide a sound approach for safely managing and disposing of our nation's used nuclear fuel and high level radioactive wastes. We are appalled of the "do nothing" political quagmire into which the nation's nuclear waste program has now fallen.

Although we do not agree with it, we acknowledge this Administration's position has been not to pursue Yucca Mountain because it believes it is "unworkable" and there are better alternatives. While the Administration may hold that view, it is irresponsible for the Administration to stop progress without actively providing leadership to develop and implement timely realistic better alternatives.

After a review of the Administration's Fiscal Year 2015 budget request we are thoroughly disappointed in what appears to be a complete abrogation of responsibility and no action to do anything other than wait for others. DOE was decisive in terminating Yucca Mountain weeks before the 2010 election, but has done virtually nothing since except vague studies and a January 2013 Strategy Report that is now unsupportable.

This inaction is irresponsible behavior, and we urge you to correct it without delay by either (a) create meaningful legislative proposals to change the NWP law or (b) following existing Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWP) law and restore Yucca Mountain. Sitting back without meaningful DOE leadership, when the need for a solution is ever growing, is not fair to future generations and is incompatible with the President's "all of the above" national energy policy, which you have endorsed.

The original 1982 NWP preamble stated:

"Federal efforts during the past 30 years to devise a permanent solution to the problems of civilian radioactive waste disposal have not been adequate."

We remember clearly those days and were heartened in what we thought was finally going to be a timely solution. Now another 32 years have passed and this Administration's actions seem to have thrown us back into the 1970s again. It is now time for you, as Secretary of Energy and internationally-respected nuclear physicist, to be proactive and lead the Nation in addressing this matter of vital importance to the well-being of our descendants as well as to the future of nuclear energy. Our Science Panel is ready to do whatever we can to assist you in this difficult challenge.

Yours sincerely for the Science Panel,

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Cc: John Holdren, White House OSTP Director