

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

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|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Action: | Do Adopt the A-Engrossed Measure |
| Vote: | 4 - 0 - 1 |
| Yeas: | Beyer, Burdick, Ferrioli, Rosenbaum |
| Nays: | 0 |
| Exc.: | Atkinson |
| Prepared By: | Erin Seiler, Administrator |
| Meeting Dates: | 6/20 |

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Urges United States Department of Energy to remove Hanford Nuclear Reservation from list of candidate sites for permanent storage of radioactive waste.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Hazards of nuclear waste
- Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: According to the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), there are currently no facilities for permanent disposal of high-level radioactive waste. Since the only way for radioactive waste to become harmless is through decay, a process which can take hundreds of thousands of years, the waste must be stored in a way that provides adequate protection for very long periods of time.

Spent fuel from nuclear power plants is currently being stored at nuclear power plants. Some spent fuel is also stored at facilities in West Valley, New York; Morris, Illinois; and at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory. Existing high-level wastes from reprocessing are presently stored at West Valley, New York; Hanford, Washington; Idaho Falls, Idaho; and Savannah River, South Carolina.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA, 1983) defined the federal government's responsibility to provide permanent disposal in a deep geologic repository for spent fuel and high-level radioactive waste. In February 2002, after many years of studying the suitability of the site, the United States Department of Energy (DOE) recommended that the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada be developed as a long-term geologic repository for high-level waste. DOE is preparing a license application to submit to the NRC for construction authorization for the Yucca Mountain repository.

Seven operating commercial facilities in the United States are licensed to dispose of low-level radioactive wastes. They are (1) West Valley, New York; (2) Maxey Flats, Kentucky; (3) Sheffield, Illinois; (4) Beatty, Nevada; (5) Hanford, Washington; (6) Clive, Utah; and (7) Barnwell, South Carolina. At the present time, only the latter three sites are receiving waste for disposal.

The Hanford Nuclear Reservation is in eastern Washington, approximately 40 miles north of Hermiston, Oregon.

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This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.