



ECOS

Environmental Council of the States

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The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chair, Armed Services Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Armed Services Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chair, Subcommittee on Energy &
Water Development
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
Chair, Subcommittee on Energy &
Water Development
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

The Honorable Angus King
Chair, Subcommittee on Strategic
Forces
Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

The Honorable John Kennedy
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Energy & Water Development
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Energy & Water Development
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

The Honorable Deb Fischer
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Strategic Forces
Armed Services Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

May 18, 2023

Dear Congressional Leaders,

ECOS, the nonpartisan, nonprofit association of top state environmental leaders, writes to you regarding the importance of adequately funding environmental cleanup of the nuclear weapons complex to protect human health and the environment. State environmental agencies play a key role in this cleanup mission as regulators with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Environmental Management (EM). ECOS urges Congress to appropriate the funding levels necessary to fully fund compliant cleanup work to achieve milestones on schedule, and without narrowed scope, as required by federal facility agreements, permits, and consent orders. To meet existing regulatory and legal agreements across the country, EM needs substantially more funding. Meeting those agreements is necessary to keep our communities safe and meet the needs of the cleanup mission.

The sites that make up the nuclear weapons complex played a key role in the United States' national security mission during World War II and throughout the Cold War. Additionally, some of the historic and ongoing nuclear energy research at these sites supports the nation's clean energy future. As the states and communities that host these sites have sacrificed for the security of the country, Congress has a duty to support full and expeditious cleanup of the complex.

The scope of the nuclear weapons complex cleanup is immense, representing one of largest and most challenging environmental remediation efforts on the planet. This effort is a priority for the states, as stated in [ECOS Resolution 10-3: Cleanup Budgets for the Nuclear Weapons Complex](#), because proper cleanup of the complex is critical to protecting human health and mitigating damage to natural resources. Since the creation of EM in 1989, much progress has been made. The complex that originally comprised over 100 sites in 33 states has been reduced to 15 sites in 11 states. However, there is still much more

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work to do as these remaining sites are some of the most complex and contaminated.

Continued cleanup of the complex remains a priority issue for states. The remaining work includes remediation of additional facilities and waste sites, packaging and shipment of the country's largest volume of transuranic (TRU) waste, treatment of billions of gallons of impacted groundwater, and retrieval and treatment of million gallons of radioactive and chemical waste currently stored in aging underground tanks.

DOE's [FY2024 Congressional budget request for the Office of Environmental Management](#) estimated the remaining life-cycle cost of cleanup to be up to \$676,127 billion with estimated active cleanup completion timelines ranging from 2078-2091. Notably, the U.S. Government Accountability Office has identified that from 2011 to 2020, EM's estimated liability grew by \$243 billion, even as they spent \$63.2 billion. This counterintuitive change in liability indicates that significant budget increases will be needed to achieve cleanup milestones.

As a result, even if a fully funded and compliant cleanup budget for FY24 is realized, states will continue to ask Congress for an increase in the DOE-EM budget to appropriately fund the work in the future. Even as some of the remaining sites complete their active cleanup, the annual cleanup budget required may grow. Until an adequate budget to meet cleanup milestones is appropriated, long-term costs for the American people and risk to human health and the environment will continue to increase.

We encourage Congress to support a budget for the entire EM program that ensures compliance with all federal facility agreements, permits, and consent orders, and allows DOE to achieve cleanup milestones on schedule. Thank you for your careful consideration of this urgent national priority. We welcome the opportunity to discuss it with you further.

Sincerely,



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ECOS President
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control