



Environmental Council of the States

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May 29, 2025

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

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

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

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

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

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

The Honorable John Kennedy
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 Scott DesJarlais
Chair, Subcommittee on Strategic
Forces
Armed Services 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 Seth Moulton
Ranking Member, Subcommittee
on Strategic Forces
Armed Services Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Congressional Leaders:

As Congress begins considering appropriations for federal fiscal year 2026, ECOS, the nonpartisan, nonprofit association of state environmental agency leaders, requests that you adequately fund cleanup of the nuclear weapons complex legacy waste sites to protect human health and the environment. As regulators overseeing this work in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, state environmental agencies play a vital role in this cleanup. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Environmental Management (EM) requires substantial additional funding to meet existing regulatory and legal agreements, and to keep our communities safe. As stated in ECOS Resolution 10-3: Cleanup Budgets for the Nuclear Weapons Complex, federal funding to complete this work is a priority for states because proper cleanup of the complex is critical to protecting human health, mitigating damage to natural resources, and promoting economic development.

The sites that make up the nuclear weapons complex played an important role in the United States' national security mission throughout World War II and the Cold War. Some of these sites have continuing missions in support of nuclear weapons refurbishment and the nation's energy and AI future. However, there remains immense and complex cleanup work to be completed at sites across states and Congressional districts. The U.S. Treasury Department has identified the remaining cleanup as the third largest liability for the federal government. The communities around these sites have sacrificed for the security of the country, and the federal government has a duty to support full and expeditious cleanup of the complex. We request that Congress provide the fully compliant funding levels necessary for EM to meet this obligation.

James Kenney
New Mexico Environment
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ECOS President

Chris Wells
Mississippi Department of
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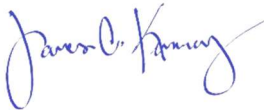
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Since the creation of EM in 1989, cleanup efforts have reduced the complex from its original 100 sites in 33 states to 15 sites in 11 states. Important progress is being made at these remaining sites in the management of waste and remediation of land for reuse. For example, at the Hanford site, over 800,000 gallons of low activity tank waste has been retrieved, pre-treated, and staged for vitrification at the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant this summer. The Savannah River Site in South Carolina is reducing risk to the environment by removing high-level waste and closing tanks with a goal of completion of the liquid waste program by 2037. In Idaho, cleanup is progressing with the site transferring its 7,500th shipment of waste to WIPP earlier this month. And with soil remediation complete at the East Tennessee Technology Park in Oak Ridge, portions of the site are now being put to reuse in support of new nuclear power.

Although significant progress is being made, there is much left to be done and some of the most challenging work still lies ahead. 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 millions of gallons of radioactive and chemical waste currently stored in aging underground tanks.

ECOS urges Congress to appropriate funding levels necessary for the EM program to achieve or exceed negotiated cleanup milestones as required by enforceable federal facility agreements, permits, and consent orders, to allow DOE to achieve cleanup milestones on schedule, and to support the reduction in the federal government's liability at these sites. Thank you for your careful consideration of this urgent national priority. We welcome the opportunity to discuss it with you further.

Sincerely,



James Kenney
ECOS President