

Thursday November 12, 2015

The Honorable John Shimkus
Chairman, Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Shimkus,

On behalf of the State of Illinois and the Council of State Governments Midwest Radioactive Materials Transportation Committee please find below my answer to your follow up question as presented in your letter dated October 29, 2015. You will also find follow up information for Congressman Flores.

The Honorable John Shimkus

1. The Blue Ribbon Commission highlighted the role of state organizations in DOE's spent fuel transportation planning efforts. It stated after the Yucca Mountain Project was cancelled, the Department Of Energy and Nuclear Regulatory Commission provided reduced funding levels to the state regional groups. Is this still the case?

It's important to understand that all four of the multistate organizations exist for other purposes – their radioactive waste transportation projects are an important but small part of their many activities they undertake to bring states together for the purpose of finding multistate solutions to common problems.

Having said that, it is true that, following the cancellation of the Yucca Mountain Project in 2010, all of the state regional groups lost the funding they had previously received from the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission stepped in with a small amount of funding to help the transportation projects continue, but that funding only lasted a year or two.

Fortunately, in 2012, after the Blue Ribbon Commission released its final report, the DOE Office of Nuclear Energy re-established the regional cooperative agreements. In fact, all four regions are currently in Year 4 of our four-year agreements, so the organizations are now having discussions with DOE regarding the renewal of these agreements for another four years. In the Midwest, the funding we have received to date has been sufficient. Our project is staffed by approximately 1.5 FTEs, and we're able to get quite a lot of work done. As the pace of progress accelerates, however, we will likely need to add staff to the project to keep up with all the work.



A. If so, given the required lead time to ship spent fuel, are you concerned that DOE's inadequate funding of your organizations may hinder any efforts to meet DOE's goal of operating an interim storage site by 2021?

Our funding has been adequate to date and we're hopeful the level of funding will be maintained in the new four-year agreement. But certainly, if we did receive inadequate funding, I would be concerned about our region being able to fully engage in consultative, cooperative transportation planning with DOE and our state and tribal partners.

The Honorable Flores

In my testimony, I answered Congressman Flores' below question and stated I would provide follow up information after meeting with the Department of Energy.

1. Mr. Horn, the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board recently recommended that DOE expedite its efforts to finalize and publish documentation supporting its integration and planning tools associated with the transportation of spent nuclear fuel, and release a modeling tool to the public, to "increase their understanding of the constraints on routing options for the transportation of spent nuclear fuel." Will you please describe how DOE is engaging with regional organizations as they develop the required routing models?

After my October 1, 2015 testimony, I had the opportunity to attend a DOE presentation regarding many "system analysis and crosscuts" tools. These tools, which are still under development, are being designed to provide a system-wide analysis for the current and future inventories of spent fuel. My initial impression is that once fully developed these tools will be of great benefit to both the DOE and states to make the most informed decisions possible with regards to shipping spent fuel.

Another tool that has just been introduced to the stakeholders is the "Stakeholder Tool for Assessing Radioactive Transportation," or START. This tool is a route identification and analysis tool that will allow the DOE and stakeholders to work collectively to identify the best possible routes for spent fuel transportation. This tool works independently of other routing and risk analysis tools such as the Rail Corridor Risk Management System software tool.

Sincerely,



Kelly Horn

Head of Environmental Management,
Illinois Emergency Management Agency
Co-Chair, CSG Midwest/Radioactive Materials
Transportation Committee