

**Comment Submitted Online By Scott Tyler on the U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical
Review Board's June 9, 2026, Spring Meeting**

Thank you for taking my public comments. I am Professor (retired) Scott W. Tyler, and I served as a Board member of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board from December 2022 until July 16, 2025, when I, along with all but one of the remaining NWTRB members was terminated without explanation via email from the White House.

Why we were fired I cannot say. I am, however, reasonably certain that it was not for budgetary reasons. The notice of terminations occurred well before Elon Musk's DOGE, and I note that requested budgets for the NWTRB appeared to be same as when the full board was present. During the first Trump administration, no new members of the Board were appointed and the board operated with only approximately half of its required membership using renewed appointments. Under the Biden administration, new members were added, and the Board was brought up to almost full staff.

Congress recognized the need for an independent voice on the nation's nuclear waste management as far back as 1987 when the Board was created by congressional legislation and signed by President Ronald Reagan. Congress saw the need for a public-facing technical review board at that time, specifically recognizing that public understanding and acceptance of nuclear waste management would require a level of trust that only an independent, apolitical and transparent board could give.

For that reason, Congress was very specific in who could serve on the board, with our nominations coming not from the executive branch or Congress, but from the National Academies of Science. The law requires the Board members to be chosen based solely on scientific and engineering expertise. In fact, Congress was quite specific on who could not be nominated to serve on the board to avoid even the slightest appearance of a conflict of interest or political interference.

The 9 members initially told to resign or be terminated on January 21, 2025, had a collective experience of more 300 years working on all aspects of nuclear energy and nuclear waste. We served the nation by providing independent technical and scientific peer review of nuclear waste programs at the Department of Energy and

we reported these findings to the Department, Congress and the public. We were the public's eyes on these programs, conducting public meetings with the Department of Energy several times a year, importantly offering the opportunity to take public comment on the record.

The nation needs solutions to its nuclear waste issues, especially going forward with new reactor designs. To fire almost the entire Board the day after inauguration, without having qualified replacements ready to take over (and here qualified refers to the process of board member nomination as defined in the statute signed by President Reagan in 1987) sends the nation's nuclear programs backwards, and does not follow the statutory requirement to provide critical independent and public facing opportunities for the American people to be part of the nuclear waste solution. If history and experience here in the US and as described in this meeting's international presentations teaches us anything, it is that the public needs be an informed partner in nuclear waste management solutions, and that without independent voices and review, we will simply keep kicking the can (of nuclear waste) down the road.

I see this termination as an unnecessary and destructive step backwards for nuclear power and nuclear waste management in this country. Considering this meeting's presentations, many of which documented the need for transparency and public awareness, I believe it is important with this comment to clearly document the changes that the NWTRB has gone through in the last 18 months. I have the highest regard for Dr. Swift, but a board of one member is not board in my opinion, nor can one person be fully capable of addressing the very diverse science and engineering issues surrounding nuclear waste management. I would urge the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board to request answers to the question that is critical to the nation's energy future: "What is the plan now to ensure trust and independent technical and scientific review to the administration, the Congress and the American people?"

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments. I also wish to express my appreciation to the current Board and the staff of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board for your dedication and service to the nation.

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