



**U.S. NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL
REVIEW BOARD**

**FISCAL YEAR 2025
BUDGET REQUEST**

**INCLUDING BOARD PERFORMANCE AND MANAGEMENT GOALS FOR
FISCAL YEARS 2024 THROUGH 2025**

AND

EVALUATION OF BOARD PERFORMANCE IN FISCAL YEAR 2023

MARCH 2024

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U.S. NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD

FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET REQUEST

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board (Board) is an independent agency in the Executive Branch of the federal government. The Board performs ongoing and objective peer review of the technical and scientific validity of activities undertaken by the Secretary of Energy under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA) (Public Law 97-425), as amended, including the packaging, transportation, and disposal of spent nuclear fuel (SNF) and high-level radioactive waste (HLW). The Board also advises and makes recommendations to Congress and the Secretary on technical issues related to nuclear waste management and disposal.

Contained in this Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Budget Request is the Board's Performance Plan for FYs 2024 through 2025 and the Board's evaluation of its FY 2023 performance. The Board's budget request for FY 2025 is \$4,100,000. The Board's FY 2025 request reflects its continued strong commitment to sound budgeting and cost-effective management practices and the focus of the Board's leadership on maximizing program performance and efficiency through evidence-based decision making and ongoing evaluation of the agency's performance.

ABOUT THE BOARD

The Board was established in the 1987 amendments to the NWPA to "...evaluate the technical and scientific validity of activities undertaken by the Secretary after the date of enactment of the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1987" (NWPAA). In accordance with this mandate, and in line with the legislative history of the NWPAA, the Board conducts independent analyses of U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) activities and provides expert advice to DOE and Congress on technical issues related to nuclear waste management and disposal.

The law requires the Board to report its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to Congress and the Secretary. The legislative history of the NWPAA makes clear that the Board cannot compel DOE to accept Board recommendations, but DOE is expected to heed the Board's advice or clearly state why it does not. According to the NWPAA, "the Board shall cease to exist not later than one year after the date on which the Secretary begins disposal of high-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel in a repository."

THE BOARD'S CONTINUING ROLE

When Congress amended the NWPA in 1987 to identify Yucca Mountain in Nevada as the sole site to be characterized for its suitability as the location for a deep geologic repository, concerns were raised that, without a comparison of sites, the technical and scientific credibility of the site-characterization effort might be questioned. Congress created the Board to ensure that an ongoing independent peer review of DOE's nuclear waste management activities would be undertaken, including packaging and transporting SNF and HLW and developing a repository for the permanent disposal of the wastes.

Following the enactment of the NWPAA, the Board's review largely focused on DOE work related to characterizing the Yucca Mountain site and developing a deep geologic repository. Since 2010, the Board's review has changed to focus on DOE research related to the packaging, storage, and transportation of SNF, the performance of SNF and HLW in a repository, DOE studies related to the potential siting of a repository in different geologic environments, and efforts to integrate the waste management system. From the time the Board began operation, it has continued to report the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from its ongoing review of the technical and scientific validity of DOE's activities to Congress and the Secretary of Energy. The Board will continue these activities in FY 2025.

The Board's objective and independent review and analysis of DOE's activities will continue to be indispensable to the technical credibility, successful implementation, and public acceptance of the nuclear waste management program in the future.

BOARD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR FYS 2022 THROUGH 2026

The Board established three Strategic Objectives in its Strategic Plan for FY 2022 through 2026. The Strategic Objectives reflect the Board's continuing commitment to its mission established in the NWPAA, including (1) conducting an ongoing, independent technical and scientific evaluation of DOE activities related to the NWPA and (2) advising Congress and the Secretary.

During FYS 2022 through 2026, the Board will:

- 1) continue its evaluation of DOE activities related to implementation of the NWPA and relevant amendments to that Act. Based on its evaluation, the Board will report its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to Congress and the Secretary.
- 2) develop objective technical and scientific information that will be useful to policy makers in Congress and the Administration on issues related to SNF and HLW management and disposal. The Board will communicate such information to Congress and the Secretary in letters, reports, and testimony.
- 3) compile information and report to Congress and the Secretary on its findings, conclusions, and recommendations from experience gained during 35 years of reviewing the U.S. nuclear waste management and disposal program and from observing waste management efforts in other countries.

ACHIEVING THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT. On an annual basis, in accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act, as amended, the Board's leadership identifies Performance Goals (PGs) and Management Goals (MGs) for the current year and identifies Goals for the subsequent year that will lead to the accomplishment of the Strategic Objectives. The PGs and MGs are included in the Board's Performance Plan.

LEARNING AGENDA APPROACH. The Board’s Performance Plan for a given year includes its *Strategic Objectives*, its *PGs*, its *MGs*, and a description of Board attributes, activities, and practices supporting achievement of the Goals. An evaluation of Board performance for the preceding FY is included in the Board’s budget request and used as input in updating the Performance Plan and developing the Board’s budget request for the subsequent FY. In updating and implementing the plan, the Board’s leadership is committed to using a learning agenda approach by consistently building and using evidence to:

- 1) proactively evaluate the agency’s performance to determine what works well and where performance can be improved;
- 2) maximize results by strategically focusing resources and attention where the needs are greatest;
- 3) reinforce the strategic direction, timeliness, and relevance of the Board’s technical evaluations of DOE activities;
- 4) adapt agency direction as evidence and context shifts; and
- 5) ensure effective communications with DOE and Congress and ensure other stakeholders are informed of the Board’s activities.

Adopting a learning agenda approach ensures that the Board’s Performance Goals and Strategic Objectives are prioritized to meet the agency’s mission.

EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH. To ensure the effective and efficient execution of its mission, as noted above, the Board employs a learning agenda and evidence-based approach to set priorities that guide its decision making, operational planning, and development of its budget. Additionally, in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-19-23, *Phase 1 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018*, the Board has appointed a Chief Data Officer and Data Governance Body.

PERFORMANCE PLAN FOR FYS 2024 THROUGH 2025

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR FYS 2024 THROUGH 2025. Presented below are the Board’s Strategic Objectives for FYS 2022 through 2026, followed by the relevant PGs for FYS 2024 through 2025. Both the Strategic Objectives and the PGs reflect the goals of the agency leadership and are outcome oriented.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #1: *The Board will continue its evaluation of DOE activities related to implementation of the NWPA and relevant amendments to that Act. Based on its evaluation, the Board will report its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to Congress and the Secretary.*

PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR FYS 2024 THROUGH 2025

PG 1-A: In FY 2024, the Board will hold a public meeting on DOE's generic disposal studies focused on SNF and HLW disposal in crystalline host rock and related topics.

PG 1-B: In FY 2024 through 2025, the Board plans to dedicate portions of at least two public meetings to continue its evaluation of DOE activities to develop a consent-based siting approach for a federal interim storage facility for SNF.

PG 1-C: In FY 2024 through 2025, the Board will continue to review the technical issues DOE will need to address before it can begin the implementation of an integrated program for the nationwide transport of SNF and HLW.

***STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2:** The Board will develop objective technical and scientific information that will be useful to policy makers in Congress and the Administration on issues related to SNF and HLW management and disposal. The Board will communicate such information to Congress and the Secretary in letters, reports, and testimony.*

PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR FYS 2024 THROUGH 2025

PG 2-A: In FY 2024, the Board will report on the system-wide implications of using large canisters for the dry storage of SNF, with a focus on the potential for direct disposal of those canisters.

PG 2-B: In FY 2024, the Board will hold a public meeting on the DOE activities related to packaging, drying, and dry storage of DOE-managed SNF and HLW.

PG 2-C: In FYS 2024 through 2025, the Board plans to evaluate DOE research and development on the integrity of SNF canisters during storage and transportation, including research related to the consequences of a potential canister breach.

***STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #3:** The Board will compile information and report to Congress and the Secretary on its findings, conclusions, and recommendations from experience gained during 35 years of reviewing the U.S. nuclear waste management and disposal program and from observing waste management efforts in other countries.*

PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR 2024 THROUGH 2025

PG 3-A: In FY 2024 through 2025, the Board will continue its efforts to identify recent siting lessons-learned, such as those from Canada and Switzerland, which could be applicable to DOE's effort to use a consent-based siting approach for a federal interim storage facility.

PG 3-B: In FY 2024 through 2025, the Board will continue its technical information exchange activities with countries such as France, Sweden, and Finland, where sites for deep geologic repositories for SNF or HLW are being selected, licensed, or constructed.

PG 3-C: In FYS 2024 through 2025, the Board will continue to monitor activities in other countries related to disposal of SNF and HLW. International disposal program information will be made available on the Board's website as a resource for Congress and the public.

MANAGEMENT GOALS FOR FYS 2024 THROUGH 2025. To enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Board activities supporting its Strategic Objectives and PGs, the Board has identified the following MGs for FYs 2024 through 2025:

MG-1: The Board will continue to implement actions to optimize organizational efficiency and accountability and maximize employee performance.

MG-2: The Board will identify any potential constraints on the agency’s ability to perform its mission and implement the changes that may be necessary for mitigating such constraints through proactive management and allocation of resources.

MG-3: The Board will continue to maintain effective communication among its geographically dispersed Board members. The Board will also facilitate communication between Board members and the professional staff members who support the Board’s technical and scientific review of DOE activities from the Board offices located in Arlington, VA.

MG-4: The Board will continue webcasting its meetings and making available archived recordings of the webcasts on its website. Furthermore, the Board will continue to utilize its office resources located in Arlington, VA to foster collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.

MG-5: The Board will continue to conduct its ongoing reviews in the most cost-effective means possible. The Board will use videoconferencing to hold its meetings in a hybrid format (virtual and in-person), to the extent this can be done without reducing the effectiveness of the meetings concerned.

MG-6: The Board will take action to pass on institutional memory and expertise to succeeding Board members and staff. When appropriate, the Board may also provide opportunities for one or more undergraduates or graduate students in disciplines related to the Board’s activities to support the Board’s technical staff in performing information research and technical analysis.

MG-7: The Board will update its technical resources and capabilities, as necessary, to maintain and improve the core competencies of its professional staff. The Board will identify, recruit when necessary, and retain highly qualified professionals with the expertise and related knowledge needed to support the work of the Board members and to help the Board achieve its Strategic Objectives and PGs.

MG-8: The Board will develop and support innovation and collaboration to foster staff engagement and morale while also promoting diversity and inclusion.

BOARD ATTRIBUTES, ACTIVITIES, AND PRACTICES SUPPORTING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE GOALS. The following attributes, activities, and practices support the implementation of the Board’s ongoing peer review and reflect the Board’s commitment to its core values of objectivity, openness, technical and scientific rigor, and timeliness.

AUTHORITY UNDER THE LAW. The Board has the necessary authority, under current law, to achieve its Strategic Objectives and PGs.

CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY. Analyses of DOE’s technical and scientific work are performed by Board members who are appointed by the President from a list of nominees submitted by the National Academy of Sciences. The Board members are eminent experts in their fields and serve part-time. They are supported by a small, full-time professional staff whose members are highly credentialed in the relevant scientific and technical disciplines. The Board reports its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to Congress and the Secretary of Energy. The Chair, other Board members, and professional staff testify before Congress, as requested. Board reports, testimony, and correspondence, along with meeting agendas, transcripts, presentations, webcasts, and public comments, are posted on the Board’s website at www.nwtrb.gov.

EFFECTIVE USE OF ANALYTICAL RESOURCES. Board members and the Board’s professional staff are assigned by the Chair to lead or support Board activities, as appropriate. The Board maintains the option of organizing panels and working groups to help facilitate, integrate, and focus its technical and scientific review, and for other purposes. The Board is authorized by its enabling legislation to hire expert consultants to support in-depth reviews of specific technical topics.

TRANSPARENCY, COLLABORATION, AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT. To support its peer review and information gathering activities, the Board holds public meetings at which technical information is presented by representatives of DOE, its contractors, and other organizations involved in nuclear waste management and disposal. At these meetings, Board members and professional staff question presenters, and time is provided for input and comments from interested members of the public. The Board typically holds two or three public meetings per year and announces them on its website and in the *Federal Register* four to six weeks before the meetings are held. The Board continues its goals of transparency of deliberations by webcasting its public meetings and archiving them on the Board’s website. In addition to the Board’s public meetings, Board panels or other small groups of Board members and staff also hold smaller meetings, as needed, to investigate specific technical topics. In order to continue its review of DOE’s activities as effectively as possible, the Board held several virtual meetings during the pandemic and hybrid (virtual and in-person) meetings since September 2022. Both the virtual and hybrid meetings were managed successfully; thus, the Board will continue to host its public meetings in the hybrid format, unless the virtual option is in the best interest of participant safety and cost savings. The Board will continue to support transparency to the public by adhering to OMB memo M-23-17, *Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act Implementation Guidance*, to ensure its congressionally mandated reports are made available on the Board’s website (www.nwtrb.gov) and submitted to the repository hosted by the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO).

Board members and staff also engage in site visits, visits to national laboratories and facilities, and meetings with DOE and national laboratory and contractor staff working on specific projects and programs. Board members and staff attend technical symposia and conferences related to SNF and HLW management and disposal. Representatives of domestic and international organizations involved in the management and disposal of SNF and HLW are invited to participate in Board public meetings and workshops. On occasion, Board members and/or staff travel to other countries to meet with such organizations to observe their technical programs and best practices, perform benchmarking, and

assess potential analogs, among other things. Information gathered from these visits is used to enhance the Board’s evaluation of DOE activities and to advise and inform Congress and the Secretary of Energy. Since the pandemic began in March 2020, Board members and staff have participated in virtual meetings, symposia, and conferences.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY. In executing its reviews and analyses, the Board will continue to adhere to diversity and equity good practices and to ensure its actions do not adversely affect disadvantaged communities, consistent with the Board’s Equity Action Plan. The Board has expanded its outreach to a broader range of Tribal nations that may have an interest in the DOE activities related to the potential transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste near or through Tribal lands. For example, the Board invited representatives from several Tribal nations to participate in the Board’s public meeting held on March 28, 2023 (for more information see [Board Meeting - March 28, 2023](#)).

FEDERAL MISSION RESILIENCE (FMR) STRATEGY. The Board has an established continuity of operations plan that implements a proactive posture to minimize disruption in executing the Board’s mission. Furthermore, the Board’s succession plan enables leadership to ensure the essential functions of the Board continue to be carried out as required in its enabling legislation.

EVALUATION OF BOARD PERFORMANCE IN FY 2023

The Board uses annual evaluations of its performance as input in updating its PGs and MGs for the current year and identifying PGs for the subsequent year. The PGs reflect the objectives of the agency leadership and are outcome oriented. The annual evaluations of the Board’s performance are also used as input to the development of the Board’s annual budget request.

BOARD PERFORMANCE IN FY 2023 – PERFORMANCE GOALS. The PGs, which are the subject of this evaluation, were included as part of the Board’s Performance Plan for FYs 2023 through 2024 contained in the Board’s FY2024 Budget Request. In the following evaluation, the Strategic Objectives on which the PGs are based are stated followed by a table displaying the associated PGs and the activities undertaken by the Board to accomplish the PGs in FY 2023.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #1: *The Board will continue its evaluation of DOE activities related to implementation of the NWPA and relevant amendments to that Act. Based on its evaluation, the Board will report its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to Congress and the Secretary.*

| FY 2023 – 2024 PERFORMANCE GOALS | BOARD ACTIVITIES |
|--|--|
| <u>PG 1-A:</u> In FY 2023, the Board will hold a public meeting on DOE activities to evaluate the removal of SNF from commercial nuclear power plant sites. | <p>The Board held a public meeting on March 28, 2023, on DOE activities to evaluate the removal of SNF from commercial nuclear power plant sites: March 28, 2023 Meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Following the meeting, the Board issued a letter to DOE, providing its findings and recommendations: [August 24, 2023 Board letter]. |

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| <p><u>PG 1-B:</u> In FY 2023, the Board plans to hold a public meeting on DOE activities to site and develop a federal interim storage facility for SNF.</p> | <p>The Board held an international workshop and a public meeting August 29-30, 2023, on DOE’s consent-based siting process leading to a federal interim storage facility for SNF: [August 29, 2023 Workshop; August 30, 2023 Meeting].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Board expects to issue a letter or report containing findings, conclusions, and recommendations in early FY 2024. |
| <p><u>PG 1-C:</u> In FYs 2023 through 2024, the Board plans to hold a public meeting on DOE’s research and development (R&D) related to the potential for chloride-induced stress corrosion cracking in SNF canisters.</p> | <p>The Board continues to follow the DOE activities to study the potential for chloride-induced stress corrosion cracking in SNF canisters. In FY 2023, the Board attended meetings of the Electric Power Research Institute Extended Storage Collaboration Program and the DOE-NE storage and transportation R&D annual program review, where details of DOE-sponsored R&D on the potential for chloride-induced stress corrosion cracking in SNF canisters were presented.</p> <p>Because there has not been a significant change in overall progress, the Board decided to postpone a public meeting on this topic, and instead conduct additional fact-finding meetings with DOE.</p> |

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2: *The Board will develop objective technical and scientific information that will be useful to policy makers in Congress and the Administration on issues related to SNF and HLW management and disposal. The Board will communicate such information to Congress and the Secretary in letters, reports, and testimony.*

| FY 2023 – 2024 PERFORMANCE GOALS | BOARD ACTIVITIES |
|---|---|
| <p>PG 2-A: In FY 2023, the Board will report on the system-wide implications of using large canisters for the dry storage of SNF, with a focus on the potential for direct disposal of those canisters.</p> | <p>The Board made good progress in developing a report on the system-wide implications of using large canisters for the dry storage of SNF. The emphasis of the report will be on DOE R&D efforts regarding the direct disposal of SNF in large canisters. The Board expects to issue this report in FY 2024.</p> |
| <p>PG 2-B: In FY 2023 through 2024, the Board plans to hold a public meeting on the DOE activities related to packaging, drying, and dry storage of DOE-managed SNF, including aluminum-clad SNF.</p> | <p>The Board continues to evaluate DOE efforts related to packaging, drying, and dry storage of DOE-managed SNF. The Board attended meetings of the DOE Spent Nuclear Fuel Working Group (on September 28, 2022, and May 9-11, 2023).</p> <p>The Board continues to plan for a FY 2024 public meeting on DOE’s activities to manage its SNF (as well as its HLW).</p> |
| <p>PG 2-C: In FY 2023 through 2024, the Board will continue to review the technical issues DOE will need to address before it can begin the implementation of an integrated program for the nationwide transport of SNF and HLW.</p> | <p>The Board held a public meeting on March 28, 2023, on DOE activities to evaluate the removal of SNF from commercial nuclear power plant sites, including several transportation-related topics: March 28, 2023 Meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Following the meeting, the Board issued a letter to DOE, providing its findings and recommendations: [August 24, 2023 Board letter]. <p>Members of the Board’s staff attended the Annual Transportation Stakeholders Forum during May 22-25, 2023, where DOE discussed details of its initiatives related to future transportation of SNF and HLW.</p> |

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #3: The Board will compile information and report to Congress and the Secretary on its findings, conclusions, and recommendations from experience gained during 35 years of reviewing the U.S. nuclear waste management and disposal program and from observing waste management efforts in other countries.

| FY 2023 – 2024 PERFORMANCE GOALS | BOARD ACTIVITIES |
|---|---|
| <p>PG 3-A: In FY 2023 through 2024, the Board will build upon its 2015 report to Congress and the Secretary on selecting a site for a repository and identify recent siting lessons-learned, such as those from Canada and the United Kingdom, that could be applicable to DOE’s effort to use a consent-based siting approach for a federal interim storage facility.</p> | <p>During its Summer 2023 public meeting and international workshop, the Board received presentations from representatives of Canada, Switzerland, and Sweden about lessons learned from siting radioactive waste facilities in those countries.</p> <p>The workshop presentations may be found on the Board’s website: [August 29, 2023 Workshop].</p> |
| <p>PG 3-B: In FY 2023 through 2024, the Board will continue its technical information exchange activities with countries, such as France, Switzerland, and Finland, where sites for deep geologic repositories for SNF or HLW are being selected, licensed, or constructed.</p> | <p>The Board conducted a detailed technical information exchange in Switzerland in October 2022. The Board met with representatives of Nagra (the nuclear waste implementer), the Swiss Federal Office of Energy, the SNF interim storage facility at Zwiilag, and the Swiss underground research laboratory at Mont Terri.</p> <p>In August 2023, the Board hosted a nuclear facility siting expert (formerly of Nagra [Switzerland]) for meetings at its Arlington, VA, offices and for meetings with the DOE Office of Spent Fuel and Waste Disposition in Washington, DC.</p> |

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| <p>PG 3-C: In FYs 2023 through 2024, the Board will continue to monitor activities in other countries related to programs for the management and disposal of SNF and HLW.</p> | <p>A member of the Board’s staff participated in the Nuclear Energy Agency’s 24th meeting of the Integration Group for the Safety Case (October 11-13, 2022).</p> <p>The same staff member met with French implementer (Andra) and co-chaired a conference session on France’s nuclear waste management program at the Waste Management 2023 Conference (February 27 - March 1, 2023).</p> <p>Three staff members met with representatives of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (Canada) on January 25, 2023, to discuss progress in the Canadian nuclear waste program and to arrange future technical exchanges.</p> |
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BOARD PERFORMANCE IN FY 2023 – MANAGEMENT GOALS. To enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Board activities supporting its Strategic Objectives and PGs, the Board identified the MGs in the table below for FYs 2023 through 2024. The MGs were included in the Board’s FY2024 Budget Request. The associated activities undertaken to accomplish the MGs are opposite their respective MGs in the table.

| FY 2023 MANAGEMENT GOALS | BOARD ACTIVITIES |
|--|--|
| <p>MG-1: The Board will continue to implement actions to optimize organizational efficiency and accountability and maximize employee performance.</p> | <p>In FY 2023, the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ proactively evaluated its performance to identify opportunities for improvement; ➤ focused on where needs were greatest to ensure efficient operations; and ➤ evaluated how to achieve the best results. |
| <p>MG-2: The Board will identify any potential constraints on the agency’s ability to perform its mission and develop and implement integrated strategies for mitigating such constraints through proactive management and allocation of resources.</p> | <p>In FY 2023, the Board assessed operational constraints that may affect its ability to achieve its mission and focused attention and resources on addressing and mitigating the constraints.</p> |

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| <p>MG-3: The Board will continue to maintain effective communications among its geographically dispersed Board members. The Board will also facilitate communication between Board members and the professional staff members who support the Board’s technical and scientific review of DOE activities from the Board offices in Arlington, VA.</p> | <p>In FY 2023, the Board continued to use an electronic drop box to facilitate Board member access to source materials, information write-ups by professional staff, and draft Board documents. The Board continued to hold monthly video teleconferences as the Board transitioned to a hybrid work environment post-pandemic.</p> |
| <p>MG-4: The Board will continue webcasting its meetings and making available archived recordings of the webcasts on its website. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board will use videoconferencing to hold its meetings in a hybrid format (virtual and in-person), to the extent this can be done without reducing the effectiveness of the meetings concerned.</p> | <p>The Board transitioned to hybrid public meetings and, in line with its past practices, archived the meetings on the Board’s website at www.nwtrb.gov. The Board held two successful hybrid meetings in FY 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ March 28, 2023 ➤ August 30, 2023 <p>The President formally terminated the national emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic on April 10, 2023.</p> |
| <p>MG-5: The Board will continue to conduct its ongoing reviews in the most cost-effective means possible.</p> | <p>In FY 2023, meetings were held in a hybrid format. The Board continues to reduce the number of physical printed copies of reports by making electronic versions available for download from its website. Internal documents are coordinated electronically as the staff continues transitioning to electronic records.</p> |

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| <p><u>MG-6:</u> The Board will take action to ensure that, as far as possible, institutional memory and expertise are passed on to succeeding Board members and staff. When appropriate, the Board may also provide opportunities for one or more undergraduates or graduate students in disciplines related to the Board’s activities to support the Board’s technical staff in performing information research and technical analysis.</p> | <p>In FY 2023, the Board held an orientation meeting in December 2022 to exchange institutional knowledge and expertise with the new Board members appointed in November 2022. The Board also hosted a strategic planning meeting in May 2023 to collectively collaborate on the future performance and management goals as they relate to the Board’s mission.</p> <p>Additional updates and briefings on the Board’s mission, the Board’s work-in-progress, and plans for future review activities were discussed by Board members and staff at Board business meetings held in conjunction with the Board’s public meetings.</p> |
| <p><u>MG-7:</u> The Board will update its technical resources and capabilities, as necessary, to maintain and improve the core competencies of its professional staff. The Board will develop and implement initiatives to identify, recruit when necessary, and retain highly qualified professionals with the expertise and related knowledge needed to support the work of the Board members and to help the Board achieve its Strategic Objectives and PGs.</p> | <p>In FY 2023, the Board continued to increase the efficiency of its technological resources and capabilities. Key IT systems and programs are continuously updated to take advantage of technological advances. The Board will maximize the use of electronic resources to reduce its reliance on a physical library system.</p> |

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

U.S. NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD

SALARIES AND EXPENSES (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

“For necessary expenses of the U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, as authorized by Public Law 100-203, § 5051, *\$4,100,000* to be derived from the Nuclear Waste Fund and to remain available until September 30, 2026.”

(Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024.)

FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST BY OBJECT CLASS

U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board

Budget Request by Object Class

(Figures Rounded in Thousands of Dollars)

| Object Class Code | Object Class Title | FY 2023 Enacted | FY 2024 Annualized CR | FY 2025 Request |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 11 | Salaries | \$2,351 | \$2,351 | \$2,522 |
| 12 | Benefits | \$613 | \$613 | \$650 |
| 21 | Travel and Transportation | \$70 | \$70 | \$80 |
| 23.1 | Rent | \$382 | \$382 | \$386 |
| 23.3 | Communications and Utilities | \$40 | \$40 | \$40 |
| 24 | Printing and Reproduction | \$15 | \$15 | \$8 |
| 25 | Consultants | \$85 | \$85 | \$92 |
| 25.1/2 | Contractual Services - Other | \$89 | \$89 | \$105 |
| 25.3 | Contractual Services - Federal | \$250 | \$250 | \$185 |
| 26 | Supplies and Materials | \$30 | \$30 | \$18 |
| 31 | Equipment | \$20 | \$20 | \$14 |
| Total Budgetary Resources | | \$3,945 | \$3,945 | \$4,100 |
| <i>Total Full Time Equivalent Employees</i> | | <i>16</i> | <i>16</i> | <i>16</i> |

DETAILS OF BUDGET REQUEST BY OBJECT CLASS

To fulfill its statutory mandate for reviewing the technical and scientific validity of activities undertaken by the Secretary of Energy related to nuclear waste management and for providing independent technical and scientific information and advice to Congress and the Secretary, the Board requests \$4,100,000 for FY 2025. The Board's request reflects its continuing commitment to efficient and cost-effective budgeting and management practices.

A detailed explanation of the Board's request by object class follows.

OBJECT CLASS 11.0, SALARIES: \$2,522,000

The estimate for this object class includes funding for 11 part-time Board members, one senior executive, professional staff, and General Schedule (GS) administration staff, and includes within-grade increases. The Board members are Special Government Employees and, in accordance with the Board's enabling legislation, each member is compensated at the rate of pay of Executive Schedule Level III. The senior executive acts as the chief operating officer for the Board, and the professional staff members support the work of the Board members in evaluating the technical and scientific validity of DOE activities related to the management and disposal of SNF and HLW. GS staff members perform administrative activities related to the Board's ongoing technical and scientific evaluation and the operation of the organization. Administrative support activities include budget preparation and fiscal management, dissemination of Board publications, information technology activities, facilities management, travel planning, management of meeting logistics, and preparation and implementation of Board responses to federal directives.

The request also includes a 2% pay increase in civilian salaries (as directed by OMB), Federal Employees Retirement System contributions, and supplemental funds for a performance award pool. The Board plans to allocate 3.5% percent of its projected employee salaries (to include the salaries of personnel expected to be hired in FY 2024 and FY2025) toward awards to retain highly skilled staff and incentivize continued high-level performance. As a result, the Board's FY 2025 projected awards spending level included in this object class is \$71,837.

OBJECT CLASS 12.0, CIVILIAN PERSONNEL BENEFITS: \$650,000

The estimate for this object class represents the government's contribution for the government employee fringe benefits for Board members and staff as required by OMB memo M-08-13, *Update to Civilian Position Full Fringe Benefit Cost Factor*.

OBJECT CLASS 21.0, TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION: \$80,000

The estimate for this object class reflects reduced travels costs as the Board plans to host both virtual and in-person meetings as a cost savings measure. The Board expanded its leased office space during the pandemic, in part to reduce future travel costs. Travel costs may consist of trips for Board members, staff, and consultants for fact-finding meetings, professional meetings, conferences, orientation activities, national laboratory visits, and other events, briefings, and venues related to accomplishing the Board's Strategic Objectives and Performance Goals, as detailed in the Board's Performance Plan for FYs 2024 through 2025.

OBJECT CLASS 23.1, RENTAL PAYMENTS TO THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA): \$386,000

The amount requested in this object class category is to cover the expense of rental payments to GSA Public Building Services (PBS) under an Occupancy Agreement for leased office space in Arlington, VA. The amount reflected includes the estimated tax assessment, tax escalation fee, and GSA PBS fee for the FY 2025 lease year period.

OBJECT CLASS 23.3, COMMUNICATION, UTILITIES, MISCELLANEOUS: \$40,000

The estimate for this object class represents costs for telephone service, postage, local courier services, video teleconferencing, webcasting support, internet, and mailing services. Furthermore, this amount includes the cost of services under GSA's Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions (EIS) telecommunications contract.

OBJECT CLASS 24.0, PRINTING AND REPRODUCTION: \$8,000

The estimate for this object class is for costs associated with creating and publishing Board reports that are required by statute to be sent to Congress and the Secretary of Energy, and the Board sends them to other interested parties that request them. The estimate also includes the costs associated with the publication of additional copies of earlier reports and technical materials, as well as such other costs as those associated with publishing meeting notices in the *Federal Register*. In keeping with the federal government's efforts to increase efficiency, the Board makes all of its reports, publications, and correspondence available for download from its website to reduce the number of hard copies it needs to produce.

OBJECT CLASS 25.0, CONSULTANTS: \$92,000

The estimate for this object class includes funding for consultants to support and supplement Board and staff analyses of specific technical and scientific issues as authorized by the Board's enabling statute. Requested funding for this object class also includes estimates for expert consultants to assist the Board in developing and implementing methods that will increase public on-line access to its publications, informational resources, and other Board matters.

OBJECT CLASS 25.1/2, CONTRACTUAL SERVICES – OTHER: \$105,000

The estimate for this object class includes the cost of such items as meeting-room rentals, stenography and audio-visual support services, webcasting services for hybrid (virtual and in-person) meetings, and video recording equipment rentals for public meetings; facility maintenance agreements; and professional development for Board supervisors and staff. Other program support contracts include services for report editing and production, as well as provision of an offsite data center to allow Continuity of Operations in the event of loss of power or an incident in the Board's offices, along with contracted commercial information technology (IT) support in compliance with the Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) of 2014. Support includes information security protections to prevent unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction of information and information systems on the Board's network. Furthermore, the Board's network is

monitored to timely detect and report cyber incidents and ensure necessary resources are maintained for cybersecurity needs at the Board's offsite data center. This budget estimate also includes funding to ensure the Board complies with Executive Order (E.O.) 13556, *Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI)*, E.O. 14028, *Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity*, policies issued by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), 32 CFR Part 2002, *Controlled Unclassified Information*, along with OMB memo M-19-21, *Transition to Electronic Records*, OMB memo M-21-31, *Improving the Federal Government's Investigative and Remediation Capabilities Related to Cybersecurity Incidents*, and OMB memo M-23-18, *Administration Cybersecurity Priorities for the FY 2025 Budget*. This estimate also includes continued funding to support the Board's requirement to maintain an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program as required in E.O. 12067, *Providing for Coordination of Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Programs* and E.O. 14035, *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce*.

OBJECT CLASS 25.3, CONTRACTUAL SERVICES - FEDERAL: \$185,000

The estimate for this object class includes funding for administrative support services provided by other federal agencies, including payroll and accounting services received from GSA Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) as well as human resource (HR) services related to managing electronic official personnel folders, conducting personnel actions, and initiating personnel clearances, and legal support services received from GSA Commissions and Boards Services (CABS). The estimate also includes security background investigations performed by the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA), USAJOBS recruitment assistance received through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and other support provided through interagency agreements. The Board's enabling legislation authorizes the procurement of necessary administrative services from GSA on a reimbursable basis. This estimate includes an increase in the costs of payroll and financial reporting and services and approx. \$10K in building security fees levied by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Protective Service (FPS). Furthermore, this estimate encompasses the support received from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Federal Occupational Health Service (FOH) to provide occupational and/or environmental health services as well as personal identity verification (PIV) card support from GSA's Managed Service Office (MSO) for all Board personnel.

OBJECT CLASS 26.0, SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS: \$18,000

This estimate includes anticipated expenses for office supplies, subscriptions to technical publications and on-line academic journals and research databases, meeting supplies, and off-the-shelf technical reports and studies.

OBJECT CLASS 31.0, EQUIPMENT: \$14,000

This object class includes costs to maintain IT and other electronic equipment, including computer hardware and software. The object class includes funding for the continuation of ongoing maintenance to the Board's IT and physical security equipment, Continuity of Operations, support of E-Gov telecommuting efforts, and technical support for the management and ongoing maintenance and upgrades of the Board's cybersecurity initiatives.