



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD
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External Affairs

How to Move the Nation's Nuclear Waste Management Program Forward Is Subject of U.S. NWTRB Report

On April 30, 2021, the U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board released a report to the U.S. Congress and the Secretary of Energy, titled *Six Overarching Recommendations for How to Move the Nation's Nuclear Waste Management Program Forward*. The report is the current Board members' synthesis of their nearly decade-long experience reviewing the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) activities related to the management and disposal of spent nuclear fuel (SNF) and high-level radioactive waste (HLW). The report may be downloaded from the Board's website at <https://www.nwtrb.gov>.

Although studies have shown that SNF and HLW can be safely stored for an extended period of time if associated recommendations and programs are followed, timely progress toward the long-term solution — disposal in an underground geologic repository — is still a matter of urgency. Several significant challenges need to be addressed to ensure the development of a successful nuclear waste management program in the United States. These challenges include the current lack of a plan for developing a repository and concomitant funding, the complex array of stakeholders responsible for implementing different stages of the nuclear fuel cycle, and the unprecedentedly long time-scale for which a repository must be designed to protect the health and safety of the public and the environment. In this report, the Board members offer high-level recommendations to DOE which, if adopted as core principles, will support the creation of a robust, safe, and effective nuclear waste management capability for the nation, including laying the groundwork for a successful geologic repository.

The report provides the Board member's six overarching recommendations and associated action items in areas related to (i) an integrated organizational approach, (ii) required infrastructure and personnel needs, (iii) DOE's research approach, (iv) an iterative, adaptive waste management program approach, (v) engaging with the international community, and (vi) building public trust.

The Board was established in the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1987 to perform ongoing evaluation of the technical and scientific validity of DOE activities related to the

management and disposal of SNF and HLW. The Board is required to report its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to Congress and the Secretary of Energy. Board members are appointed by the President from a list of nominees submitted by the National Academy of Sciences. The Board is an independent federal agency in the Executive Branch.
