

Webinar explores proposed nuclear waste storage solutions

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The Council of State Governments' (CGS) Southern and Midwestern Legislative Conferences hosted a webinar to explore nuclear waste storage solutions. This webinar, the second of a two-part series, highlighted actions the federal government and private sector are currently taking to handle this ongoing issue.

Andrew Griffiths from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) emphasized that consent-based siting is the best way to find a solution for a long-term nuclear waste storage facility, and that it is superior to a top-down approach. Griffiths explained that the DOE has just recently completed the last of their 8 public meetings about consent-based siting, and that Nye County, Nevada was not included because the DOE did not want to presume that this location was the solution. He highlighted that the DOE has requested \$25 million in their fiscal year 2017 budget for grants to states, local governments, communities, and tribal nations that participate in the consent-based siting process.

Betsy Madru from Waste Control Specialists (WCS) drew attention to consolidated interim storage (CIS) and the potential for a CIS facility in Andrews County, Texas. She explained that since WCS already safely stores hazardous and radioactive waste, and has the infrastructure to support transportation of these materials, they are currently seeking a license with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to allow the storage of used nuclear fuel.

John Heaton from Eddy Lea Energy Alliance (ELEA) announced ELEA's partnership with Holtec International to build an underground CIS facility in southeastern New Mexico that is designed for a 100-year lifespan, and has already received state support. Heaton noted the urgency of CIS, as an agreement on long-term storage is not moving forward in Congress. He expects the National Environmental Policy Act Review process to span about 2.5 years of hearings.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, Midwest Energy News, Council of State Governments Knowledge Center, Waste Control Specialists, Holtec International

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