WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina) today made this statement on the MOX program at Savannah River Site.

“I very much appreciate meeting with President Trump and appreciate the time and attention he has given to the MOX issue. In our meeting today, we told President Trump that South Carolina continues to violently disagree with the decision to terminate the MOX program without a viable pathway forward.

“We also told him the proposed plan by the Department of Energy of dilute and dispose in New Mexico is not viable and simply will not work. It’s yet another half-baked idea from DOE that simply has no chance of success.

“The MOX program has not been adequately funded by the federal government in years. I also believe the contractor shares in some of the blame for the MOX program thus far. I remain hopeful we can get MOX back on track with a lower fixed price contract. Stopping a program that is seventy percent complete and replacing it with a new half-baked program that won’t work is yet another example of what is wrong with Washington.

“DOE has badly mismanaged this program but they should bear the responsibility for that mistake, not South Carolina. If DOE moves forward and scraps the MOX program, I will view it as the federal government breaking its commitment to South Carolina. I will push back and push back hard should they take that action.”

BACKGROUND:

- In 2000 the United States and the Russian Federation each agreed to dispose of 34 metric tons of weapons grade plutonium. This was enough plutonium to make several thousand nuclear warheads.
- The Russian Federation chose to burn their plutonium in a fast reactor to dispose of the surplus material. The United States chose to use MOX at Savannah River Site.

- Construction of the MOX facility began in 2007.

- The Obama Administration first proposed cancelling the program. The Trump Administration has continued to follow the Obama Administration’s lead in regards to the MOX program.