



Savannah River Site Watch

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Media Update  
April 12, 2016

**House Appropriations Committee Plans to Keep MOX Funding on Shut-Down Track;  
Fate of MOX Project Kicked Once Again Down the Road**

Columbia, SC -- The U.S. House Appropriations Committee has issued a [news release](#) - linked below & with text - recommending a funding level of \$340 million in Fiscal Year 2067 for the problem-plagued plutonium fuel (MOX) facility under construction at the Savannah River Site. The full committee has yet to vote on the recommended funding, which may be challenged by members in the committee discussion.

The \$340 million amount is the same as for FY 2016 and FY 2015 and is less than half of what the project needs to be viable.

The House Energy and Water Subcommittee, which initially deals with DOE funding, is to meet on April 13 at 1:30 p.m. to formally consider the recommended funding levels and the Senate E&W Subcommittee is to meet at 2:30 p.m. on April 13. (See schedules linked below) It is unclear what the Senate will do with the MOX project.

Tom Clements, director Savannah River Site Watch, who has been tracking DOE's plutonium disposition program since its inception in 1994, had the following statement:

*With this funding level it's clear that the House aims to keep the MOX project on a shut-down level and is merely postponing the inevitable. Though the House Appropriations Committee appears to be rejecting the administration's request for termination of the MOX project in 2017, MOX is doomed in the long-run and the approved funding level will only keep the project on life-support. It's clear that the committee intends to avoid hard choices and wants to kick the fate of the troubled MOX project down the road to a new administration.*

Meanwhile, rumors of MOX construction problems continue to be received by SRS Watch.

The legislation recommends a funding level of \$5.2 billion for DOE clean-up activities. It is not known how that will impact SRS but likely means funding will remain flat at a time when closure of high-level waste tanks is beginning to face large delays due to funding shortfalls anticipated in the future.

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Notes:

**U.S. House Appropriations Committee**

**Wednesday, April 13, 2016**

**House Energy & Water Appropriations Subcommittee** will consider the DOE spending bill, starting at 1:30. It may be webcast.

<http://appropriations.house.gov>

<http://appropriations.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=394479>

<http://appropriations.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hmkp-114-ap10-20160413-sd001.pdf>

**U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2016**

**ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE** (*Lamar Alexander, Chairman*)

Markup of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2017

2:30 p.m., Room 124, Dirksen Senate Office Building

NOTE: The webcast will be audio-only.

<http://www.appropriations.senate.gov/news/majority/hearing-and-markup-schedule-for-the-week-of-april-11-2016>

**THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2016**

**COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS** (*Thad Cochran, Chairman*)

Consideration of 302(b) Subcommittee Allocations

Markup of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2017

Markup of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2017

10:30 a.m., Room 106, Dirksen Senate Office Building

NOTE: The webcast will be audio-only.

<http://www.appropriations.senate.gov/news/majority/hearing-and-markup-schedule-for-the-week-of-april-11-2016>

**--- news release from House Appropriations Committee:**

<http://appropriations.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=394488>

## **Appropriations Committee Releases Fiscal Year 2017 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill**

*Protecting the nation from security threats and maintaining U.S. nuclear weapons, promoting an “all-of-the-above” energy strategy, and investing in water resources projects are funding priorities*

**Washington, Apr 12 -**



The House Appropriations Committee today released the fiscal year 2017 Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, which will be considered in subcommittee tomorrow. The legislation provides annual funding for national defense nuclear weapons activities, the Army Corps of Engineers, various programs under the Department of Energy (DOE), and other related agencies.

The bill totals \$37.4 billion – \$259 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and \$168 million above the President’s budget request. Funding is targeted toward national security efforts, and energy and water infrastructure investments.

“With ever-changing global threats, it is vital we keep the country at the very pinnacle of nuclear security preparedness. This bill prioritizes funding to ensure that our stockpile is modern, secure and ready,” House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers said. “Also critically important is the growth of our economy – which simply cannot occur without functioning and safe water resources and continued strides toward energy independence. This legislation will invest in all of these efforts to promote a more secure and prosperous future for our nation.”

Energy and Water Subcommittee Chairman Mike Simpson also commented on the importance of the bill:

“This is a responsible bill that supports U.S. national security, safety, and economic competitiveness – balancing these critical priorities while maintaining tight budget caps,” Chairman Simpson said. “It prioritizes the maintenance and safety of our nuclear weapons, and makes strategic investments in infrastructure projects and energy research that will help grow our economy.”

### **A summary of the subcommittee draft of the fiscal year 2017 Energy and Water Appropriations bill follows:**

The bill totals \$37.4 billion – \$259 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and \$168 million above the President’s budget request.

The bill provides strong national security investments, including increases above fiscal year 2016 for nuclear weapons programs. The bill also protects funding for critical national and

regional waterways – which handle commerce valued at more than \$2 trillion annually – through the Army Corps of Engineers, and programs that encourage energy independence and economic competitiveness. To meet these needs, the legislation contains targeted reductions to lower-priority or unnecessary programs.

**Nuclear Security** – The bill provides a total of \$12.9 billion for DOE’s nuclear weapons security programs, including Weapons Activities, Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, and Naval Reactors – a \$327 million increase above the fiscal year 2016 level. This funding will uphold the nation’s nuclear deterrence posture, maintain the safety and readiness of our weapons stockpile, and allow the U.S. to meet any nuclear threat. This includes:

- \$9.3 billion for Weapons Activities – \$438 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level;
- \$1.4 billion for Naval Nuclear Reactors – \$45 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level; and
- \$1.8 billion for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation – \$118 million below the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. This includes \$340 million in funding to help fulfill the international commitment by the U.S. to operate a Mixed Oxide (MOX) Fuel Fabrication Facility to dispose of surplus plutonium.

**Army Corps of Engineers** – The Army Corps of Engineers is funded at \$6.1 billion, an increase of \$100 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and \$1.5 billion above the President’s budget request. The bill focuses funding on activities that will have an immediate impact on public safety, job creation, and economic growth, including those that help increase the functionality of our ports and waterways. For example, the bill provides:

- \$2.7 billion for navigation projects and studies, including \$1.263 billion in funding from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund and full use of estimated annual revenues from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, to help advance American competitiveness and export ability; and
- \$1.8 billion to support public health and safety by funding flood and storm damage reduction activities, an increase of \$105 million above fiscal year 2016 and \$582 million above the budget request.

**Environmental Cleanup** – Included in the legislation is \$6.15 billion for environmental management activities, \$66 million below the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. This includes \$5.2 billion for Defense Environmental Cleanup to safely clean sites contaminated by previous nuclear weapons production.

**Energy Programs** – Funding for energy programs within DOE is \$11.08 billion – an increase of \$56 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and \$1.3 billion below the President's request. Within this total, the bill prioritizes and increases funding for energy programs that encourage U.S. economic competitiveness and that help advance the nation’s goal of an “all-of-the-above” solution to energy independence.

Research and development to advance coal, natural gas, oil, and other fossil energy technologies, which will help the country make greater use of our rich natural energy resources and help keep down energy costs, are funded at \$645 million – an increase of \$13 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. The bill reflects the national importance of these projects, and rejects the Administration’s proposal to reduce new funding for these accounts.

In addition, nuclear energy research, development, and demonstration activities are increased by \$25 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level, for a total funding level of \$1.01 billion.

Renewable energy programs, which have already received significant investments in recent years, are cut by \$248 million compared to fiscal year 2016 and \$1.07 billion compared to the President’s budget request.

**Science Research** – The bill includes \$5.4 billion for science research – an increase of \$50 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. This funding supports basic energy research, the development of high-performance computing systems, and research into the next generation of energy sources. These investments lay the groundwork for a more secure energy future, helping to reduce the nation’s dependence on foreign oil and ensuring continued economic growth.

**Bureau of Reclamation** – The legislation contains \$1.1 billion – \$131 million below the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and \$27 million above the President’s request – for the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Reclamation to help manage, develop, and protect the water resources of Western states.

Several new provisions have been included to help Californians who have suffered extreme challenges from years of historic drought, exacerbated by excessive federal regulations. These provisions in the bill will help provide relief for these communities, and will assist in the capture and delivery of more water to towns and fields.

**Yucca Mountain** – The bill continues congressional efforts to support the Yucca Mountain nuclear repository, providing \$150 million for the Nuclear Waste Disposal program and \$20 million for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to continue the adjudication of DOE’s Yucca Mountain License application. The legislation also denies the Administration’s funding proposals for non-Yucca nuclear waste activities.

**Other policy items:**

- The bill prohibits any changes to federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act.
- The bill prohibits any changes to the definition of “fill material” and “discharge of fill material” for the purposes of the Clean Water Act.
- The bill restricts the application of the Clean Water Act in certain agricultural areas, including farm ponds and irrigation ditches.

- The bill includes language allowing the possession of firearms on Corps of Engineers lands.
- The bill prohibits new nuclear nonproliferation projects in Russia.

**For the complete text of the subcommittee draft of the FY 2017 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, please visit:**

<http://appropriations.house.gov/UploadedFiles/BILLS-114HR-SC-AP-FY2017-EnergyWater-SubcommitteeDraft.pdf>

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