



Hon. Lamar Alexander  
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development  
188 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Dianne Feinstein  
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development  
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Lisa Murkowski  
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Ron Wyden  
Chair, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators, Alexander, Feinstein, Murkowski, and Wyden,

As you work to develop legislation addressing longstanding challenges of storage and disposal of our country's current 70,000 metric tons of commercial spent nuclear fuel, a radioactive waste inventory projected to more than double by 2035, we strongly urge you to consider the potential benefits of increased public safety, domestic manufacturing and domestic job creation that can come from improving current spent fuel management policy; specifically legislating the thinning out of over-crowded cooling pools and the ramping-up of more dry cask storage. Failure to incorporate this important issue into national nuclear waste legislation would be a missed opportunity to increase public confidence in the safety of domestic nuclear power operations as well as create new markets around US-manufactured technology, putting more Americans back to work.

The challenges of crafting a workable framework for long-term management of the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle are formidable, especially when one considers the substantial amount of time it will take to implement and actualize a process for permanently disposing of this waste or initially consolidating and storing it at specific interim sites prior to permanent geologic disposal. The fact is that large quantities of spent fuel will remain at reactor sites for many years to come. While the radiation levels in recently-discharged nuclear fuel must be allowed to decrease to a

level where the fuel can be stored in dry casks, the industry standard practice of using cooling pools for long-term storage—and filling pools to capacity using high-density storage racks—increases risks to safety and security in nuclear operations.

We believe that addressing this problem creates a unique opportunity to ramp up domestic manufacturing of safer, less vulnerable dry storage casks, potentially creating thousands of quality jobs. Furthermore, accelerating the transfer of fuel from over-crowded pools to dry casks is a necessary step in the process of any plan to ship spent fuel to an interim centralized storage site or geologic repository.

Americans deserve real safety improvements in spent fuel management, and these improvements are good for the long-term security of the industry, their workers, and the public. Congress cannot adequately provide real solutions to our waste storage problem without improving current spent fuel management practices, and there is little to no public safety benefit from legislating a process to move spent fuel off site without a linkage to thinning out over-crowded cooling pools.

We recognize your leadership on this very important and challenging issue, and hope that you will seize this opportunity to improve public safety and security while putting Americans to work by acknowledging the need to use more dry cask storage, and helping to facilitate increased domestic manufacturing of this important technology. On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we ask that you include language or provisions that would accelerate the transfer of spent fuel from cooling pools to dry storage casks in the national nuclear waste legislation you are developing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Foster". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David A. Foster  
Executive Director, BlueGreen Alliance