



High Level Radioactive Waste Committee Position Paper

Origin Site Transportation Coordination Number 2018-3

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In General

This Position Paper represents the views of the Western Interstate Energy Board as developed by its High-Level Radioactive Waste Committee (HLRWC). WIEB was created under the Western Interstate Nuclear Compact in 1970, and the WIEB Board members are appointed by the governors of the Compact states. The [HLRWC is composed of nuclear waste transportation experts](#) who collaborate on this topic with the U.S. Department of Energy as well as many others. The HLRWC, in existence for over thirty years, has drawn from its members' extensive experience in order to create [Position Papers](#). Once approved by the WIEB Board, this and the other Position Papers represent WIEB's view of how to create and maintain an ideal nuclear waste transportation campaign. Although the HLRWC only speaks on behalf of the Western WIEB member states in these Position Papers, it acknowledges the essential involvement of many partners in assuring this ideal campaign: one that is safe, uneventful, and publicly acceptable.

Statement of Policy

The transport of spent fuel from a nuclear reactor site will require substantial origin site coordination. All relevant state, tribal, and local interests along the transportation corridor should be involved in this planning. The focus should extend, at a minimum, from the origin site to the junction with the mainline rail system, if rail transport is being contemplated.

Background and Context

- 1. The Blue Ribbon Commission recommendation: "extensive involvement," with lead-time.** In its January 2012 final report, the Blue Ribbon Commission stated that, "[S]tate, tribal and local officials should be *extensively involved* in transportation planning and should be given

the resources necessary to discharge their roles and obligations in this arena.”¹ It added, “Given that transportation represents a crucial link in the overall storage and disposal system, it will be important to allow substantial lead-time to assess and resolve transportation issues well in advance of when materials would be expected to actually begin shipping.”²

2. Shutdown site visits have been useful.

Over recent years, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) arranged for visits to multiple shutdown nuclear power plant sites in the West. In addition to the utility and DOE and its contractors, these visits included state and tribal representatives. The visits were informative in several ways, providing the parties an opportunity to meet each other and to examine on-site and near-site highway and railroad transportation infrastructure. They also provided clarification regarding the consultation and coordination which will be necessary with an extensive number of external stakeholders.

3. State, local and tribal officials will add important perspectives to the planning process.

If the planning discussions are limited to DOE, its contractors, and utility representatives, they may be unaware of local issues that, if not properly addressed, could increase public and political concern about the pending shipments. Such issues could include routing, time/date of departure, and response capabilities.

Policy Recommendations

1. The entity that holds title to the spent fuel at the origin site, in consultation with the state lead, should convene an origin site Working Group.

At least four years before prospective spent nuclear fuel (SNF) removal from a shutdown or still-operating site, the entity that holds title to the spent fuel at the origin site, in consultation with the state lead, should convene a Working Group to consider and agree on the elements required for the start of shipments. The Working Group should include key contributors from DOE, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, other relevant federal agencies, carriers, heavy equipment operators, transportation corridor state agencies, potential corridor state regional group representatives, local government and tribal leaders, and other relevant contributors as needed.

2. The primary Working Group objective should be coordination.

The necessary elements and the appropriate participants will vary from site to site, but the objective is the same at all origin sites, which is to coordinate the work and responsibilities of all the agencies/entities that will be involved with SNF shipments from the site.

¹ BRC Report to the Secretary of Energy, Jan. 2012, pg. xiii (emphasis added).

² Ibid.

- 3. The Working Group should be involved with all aspects of transportation planning.**
In compliance with all relevant regulations, the Working Group should be responsible for selecting the method, route, and process to deliver SNF from the site to a selected mainline rail-head or other transition point.
- 4. The Working Group membership should be expanded geographically as necessary.**
Whatever mode of transport is anticipated, the Working Group should be expanded to include participants from more distant locations that could be directly impacted by shipments before they reach a mainline rail-head or other transition point.
- 5. DOE would be a key contributor to the process.**
DOE (or any new management entity) should be prepared to address how systems factors including but not limited to: cask purchase and deployment; deployment of rail assets; shipment scheduling; and on-site as well as near-site improvements, contribute to the efficient and effective removal of spent fuel from the reactor site.