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SPENT FUEL SOLUTIONS AND SONGS COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT PANEL JOINT WEBINAR: NUCLEAR WASTE
ADMINISTRATION ACT OF 2024
Via Zoom
TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING
November 21, 2024

1 SPENT FUEL SOLUTIONS AND SONGS COMMUNITY
2 ENGAGEMENT PANEL JOINT WEBINAR: NUCLEAR WASTE
3 ADMINISTRATION ACT OF 2024
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10 Transcript of video-recording meeting via Zoom
11 commencing at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, November 21, 2024.
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1 WEBINAR SPEAKERS:

2 CHRIS WAHL - (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SPENT FUEL
3 SOLUTIONS)

4 DAN STETSON - (CHAIRMAN OF THE SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR
5 GENERATION STATION COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PANEL)

6 KATRINA FOLEY - (SUPERVISOR, ORANGE COUNTY)

7 MIKE LEVIN - (U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, CALIFORNIA'S 49TH
8 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT)

1 Via Zoom, Thursday, November 21, 2024

2
3 CHRIS WAHL: All right.

4 CHAIRMAN DAN STETSON: To those of you on the West
5 Coast, good morning.

6 To those of you on the East Coast, good afternoon.

7 My name is Dan Stetson, and I'm pleased to welcome
8 you on behalf of the San Onofre Nuclear Generation
9 Station Community Engagement Panel, or SONGS CEP, of
10 which I serve as Chair.

11 The SONGS CEP is a group of 18 volunteers, mostly
12 elected officials, whose function is to serve as a bridge
13 between Southern California Edison and the general
14 public.

15 The CEP works to foster open communication,
16 community involvement, and education on the
17 decommissioning activities at SONGS.

18 We also work to bring community concerns about the
19 decommissioning, to these, to SCE.

20 Over time, we've learned that a key concern for the
21 communities around San Onofre is the safe removal of the
22 spent fuel.

23 Over the last few years, we've seen encouraging
24 progress on this issue from the Department of Energy and
25 the bipartisan Spent Fuel Solutions Caucus established by

1 Representative Mike Levin.

2 However, we believe that a successful spent fuel
3 management program will require legislative changes to
4 the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

5 We're very excited to learn more about the newly
6 proposed Nuclear Waste Administration Act of 2024, which
7 would address flaws in the in the current law that
8 prevent the timely development of spent fuel solutions.

9 Please join me in welcoming Representative Mike
10 Levin, who will discuss this bipartisan bill and how it
11 may be able to facilitate the development of federally
12 licensed facilities for the storage and disposal of spent
13 fuel and high-level radioactive waste.

14 Immediately after Congressman's presentation, a Q&A
15 will be facilitated by Spent Fuel Solutions' Executive
16 Director, Chris Wahl.

17 Congressman.

18 U.S. REPRESENTATIVE MIKE LEVIN: Well, thank you so
19 much, Dan.

20 I, I'm very grateful to you and Chris and, and
21 everyone that's participating on the Zoom for your
22 engagement.

23 This has been a top priority of mine since first
24 getting elected to Congress in 2019, and really before
25 just as a member of the community living nearby in San

1 Juan Capistrano, making sure that we did everything we
2 could to to figure out a path forward for the spent
3 nuclear fuel there at San Onofre.

4 But as I've said ad nauseam for the last six years,
5 if you want to solve the challenge that we have locally,
6 it really is a symptom of a far larger concern, which is
7 that we've got spent nuclear fuel all across the United
8 States without anywhere to send it.

9 There's no repository, there aren't any disposal
10 facilities.

11 So really from day one, I tried to engage with the
12 community and had a very constructive discussion with,
13 with so many different folks, probably some of you who
14 are on the Zoom right now.

15 And one of the recommendations that became very
16 apparent was that we needed to create a new bipartisan
17 caucus surrounded, you know, with the the context and the
18 history, which has not been great of spent nuclear fuel
19 policy and really, really have a fresh start and I
20 founded that caucus a number of years ago.

21 My dear friend from Tennessee, Chuck Fleischmann is
22 the co-lead.

23 Chuck is a very important person in all this
24 because he's the chairman of the relevant appropriations
25 subcommittee that handles spent nuclear fuel policy.

1 And we've been able to work together over these
2 past six years and, and fund about \$150 million for
3 consent-based siting of spent nuclear fuel.

4 And, and by that consent, it's so, so important
5 that we, we reach consent because if you want to avoid
6 the mistakes of the past, you, you have to try to do
7 things differently.

8 When you look at, for example, Yucca Mountain in
9 Nevada, the biggest problem with Yucca Mountain was we
10 lacked the consent of Nevada.

11 When you look at some of the other private entities
12 like waste control specialists in Texas or Holtec in New
13 Mexico, they ran into similar opposition because they
14 didn't fully have the consent of Texas or New Mexico.

15 And so looking at other countries and how they've
16 been able to have the the repository sites and disposal
17 sites actually materialize and, and you know, have a
18 productive outcome is they invested in achieving consent.

19 And so that's what we're trying to do with that
20 program.

21 And, and that program is at the DOE, at the
22 Department of Energy.

23 The challenge with the Department of Energy or the
24 Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which has a different
25 jurisdiction here.

1 But the challenge is that as the political tides
2 shift, policies shift, and this issue of spent nuclear
3 fuel management is too long term to constantly shift back
4 and forth with the political tides.

5 It is an issue I will tell you, and Chris, I, I
6 think you may want to talk, talk, speak to this a bit.

7 It is an issue that I think we have a tremendous
8 opportunity to to engage with with our colleagues across
9 the aisle in this coming Congress, even in this difficult
10 political environment where things are, obviously we
11 don't always agree on on everything, but that's ok.

12 When it comes to spent nuclear fuel, like I think
13 we can and I think we must.

14 And I guess I will just leave it there and just
15 thank you all for your continued engagement.

16 I also want to give a shout out, she's right off
17 camera, to Amanda Shafer.

18 Want to say hello?

19 You want to wave Amanda?

20 Amanda does an incredible job here in our D.C.
21 office working on spent nuclear fuel policy.

22 And if you haven't reached out and engaged with
23 Amanda, I hope you do.

24 And with that, Chris, Dan, I'll turn back to you.

25 Thank you for having me.

1 CHRIS WAHL: Thank you so much.

2 And I'm really honored to have the opportunity to
3 facilitate this conversation today.

4 We've had the chance to work on the Spent Fuel
5 Solutions Coalition since 2021 and we've made just a lot
6 of progress on that.

7 And, and part of that reason, a good chunk of that
8 reason, is our partnership with Congressman Levin.

9 So thank you for all that you've done, and Amanda's
10 been great.

11 I completely agree.

12 So I want to jump in and ask some questions.

13 Just a couple of ground rules upfront.

14 We have several questions that we're going to ask
15 that the coalition's developed, but there are a few
16 additional ones as time permits that may be asked.

17 And I know we have a very nice robust showing
18 today for this this webinar.

19 So if you do have questions, please put them in the
20 chat if you're participating, and I will do my best to
21 make sure that those get added to the conversation, time
22 permitting.

23 I think that one of the the most important things
24 that our coalition has started with is this idea that we
25 have to have legislation to fix, as you said, some of the

1 challenges that we had.

2 And thanks to your leadership, Congressman, we do
3 have a piece of legislation, the Nuclear Waste
4 Administration Act of 2024.

5 Can we start with that and, and kind of share
6 what's in that bill and why it's so important?

7 MIKE LEVIN: Well, thank you, Chris.

8 You know, the the basic idea here is that we have
9 to modernize nuclear waste management to make sure that
10 we have a a reliable, responsible, long-term path for
11 management of the nation spent nuclear fuel.

12 And, and we have, you know, we have nuclear
13 facilities all across the country that are generating
14 more waste and we have others that are decommissioned or
15 decommissioning as SONGS is that we have again, the
16 responsibility is the federal government to take title to
17 that waste.

18 We've had that responsibility since 1998.

19 Teri Sforza did a great column in the Orange County
20 Register the other day that I highly encourage everyone
21 to take a look at where she reminds everyone that this is
22 costing us, it's costing the taxpayer \$2,000,000 a day
23 because federal government has not taken title to the
24 waste they they need to.

25 And I think a big reason why is that we have lacked

1 a single purpose entity to be solely dedicated to safely
2 and responsibly storing, managing and disposing of spent
3 nuclear fuel across the country.

4 So that's what this single purpose entity is
5 designed to do working on consent basis as we are with
6 our current efforts at the DOE and and interestingly, the
7 DOE agrees that they're spread too thin for this
8 endeavor, that it requires a single purpose entity.

9 And and the other thing is a a continuous source of
10 funding.

11 That's really key because the way we funded it, as
12 I mentioned the last six years is through the annual
13 appropriations process.

14 That's why it's key to to have my friend Chuck
15 Fleischmann there because he's the the chair of the
16 relevant subcommittee of approach that funds all this
17 work.

18 But we can't just risk the annual appropriation
19 cycle.

20 If you follow how things go here in D.C., we've got
21 to make sure we get away from that and that we have a, a
22 consistent funding stream.

23 And all we're talking about for that funding stream
24 is the interest that's generated on the already existing
25 funds from many years of, of nuclear, nuclear fuel and,

1 and, and, and the buildup of, of spent nuclear fuel.

2 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, I think that's just such a good
3 point.

4 You know, it's different administrations have
5 different perspectives on the issue, right.

6 But having a dedicated funding stream, an
7 autonomous entity would be somewhat immune to that,
8 hopefully.

9 So, you know, we've had previous attempts at policy
10 reform.

11 They've been tried and failed.

12 It seems like you have optimism this time around
13 that maybe this approach will be different.

14 Can you kind of share some of your thoughts on
15 that?

16 MIKE LEVIN: Well, I think two things.

17 One is, you know, it's insanity to do the same
18 thing again and again and expect a different result.

19 So I think one of the big problems, as I mentioned
20 at the outset is we lacked, we the federal government,
21 lacked the consent-based approach.

22 And it was a top down, it was science driven, which
23 is I, I definitely support science driven, but you have
24 to have the consent of the communities, otherwise it's
25 not going to work.

1 And as I mentioned, Nevada, Texas, New Mexico, it
2 just didn't work.

3 And you know, the other thing that I think is
4 critically important is bipartisanship on this,
5 particularly in an era where you have such a closely
6 divided Congress and and frankly closely divided country.

7 And so my friend August Pfluger from Texas, he and
8 I are working on this together.

9 I had hoped that my friends in the Senate would
10 come together on a bipartisan basis.

11 We waited on introducing this bill for quite some
12 time to try to get bipartisan consensus in this, or at
13 least bipartisan cooperation in the Senate.

14 And we're never going to give up on that.

15 We have to have bipartisan cooperation in the
16 Senate, just as we do in the House to get anything done.

17 But I, I do think that we're off to a really a
18 strong start.

19 And as we proceed after Thanksgiving, we're all
20 going to have a nice Thanksgiving.

21 We're going to come back to D.C.

22 We're going to have a lame duck session where a lot
23 of things have to happen before president-elect Trump
24 gets back into office.

25 And John Thune is the Majority Leader in the

1 Senate, Mike Johnson continuing as a speaker.

2 And we hit the ground running in the 119th Congress
3 trying to build momentum, build bipartisan cosponsorship.

4 And we have all sorts of new members of Congress
5 that we are going to be inviting, Chuck and I are going
6 to be inviting to join the Spent Nuclear Fuel Solutions
7 Caucus to help us with this work.

8 CHRIS WAHL: That's great.

9 And so you're touching on that.

10 And so I, I think I want to expand a little bit
11 more.

12 Many people on this call are very interested about
13 what what happens next with the new administration and
14 new Secretary of Energy and you've touched a little bit
15 about that.

16 But how do you think, what, what's the initial
17 perspective on this new administration's mindset on
18 nuclear, if you have any insight into that at this point?

19 MIKE LEVIN: Well, I think they want to triple
20 nuclear and if that's what they want, you know, I, I have
21 been very clear on this.

22 What I want is to deal with the waste, deal with
23 this spent nuclear fuel issue, and we have to work in
24 good faith towards that end.

25 But you have to fix the back end of the fuel cycle.

1 And that is just a fact of life.

2 And we have a real problem with spent nuclear fuel
3 across the United States, and we have not been willing or
4 able to fix it for a very long time.

5 And I'm completely dedicated to fixing this
6 problem.

7 And so is my friend Chuck Fleischmann.

8 So is my friend August Pfluger.

9 And so in this new environment, I actually think,
10 Chris, this is an area where we can come together.

11 And we need help from industry to solve the
12 problem.

13 We need help from the public sector, from the
14 nonprofit sector, from the academic sector.

15 We've all got to work together and solve this
16 problem.

17 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, I agree.

18 I, you know, I think it just fundamentally stands
19 to reason that if you're going to be pro-nuclear, you got
20 to have a plan for the back end of it, right.

21 And so I'm hopeful that that could be the case too.

22 Just just thinking ahead a little bit on that.

23 Well, before I jump into what we can do to be
24 helpful, I, I think it might be helpful for the audience
25 to understand what are the next steps for the Nuclear

1 Waste Administration Act?

2 You have to reintroduce the bill in the new session
3 and then what do you hope to accomplish?

4 Is it to get to hearing, etcetera?

5 MIKE LEVIN: Yeah, so we will and it's unlikely that
6 it'll be heard this Congress just because we are very
7 limited.

8 I think we have 3 weeks left of floor time and
9 there's just an awful lot that has to be done in the lame
10 duck.

11 But I think that what we did in introducing the
12 bill this year was we set a marker and we created a, a
13 conversation and, and we were able to, to begin a, a
14 dialogue with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle
15 about what we need to do differently.

16 And so I think that serves us well in continuing to
17 grow, grow the, the scaffolding that we need around this
18 effort in the coming months.

19 Again, when we get back from the lame duck, you
20 know, right after the the new year, for me, this is a, a
21 top priority, not just this bill, but growing the caucus,
22 growing awareness and making sure we're reaching out,
23 especially to all those new members.

24 I think, you know, we've got scores of new members
25 on both sides of the aisle, many of whom I haven't even

1 met yet.

2 And, you know, just getting to know them,
3 understanding their interests and then hopefully engaging
4 them on this issue I think is very important and top of
5 mind for me.

6 CHRIS WAHL: That's great.

7 And and so ideally there would be a hearing then
8 right once the...

9 MIKE LEVIN: Yes, next, next, next session, as soon
10 as we can get that done, yes, that's the obvious next
11 step.

12 And then, you know, this is a fairly comprehensive
13 piece of legislation.

14 So it's going to, you know, need a, a thorough
15 review by all sorts of folks, But that's good.

16 That's a good thing.

17 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, that is great.

18 One, one of the accomplishments, sorry, go ahead
19 please.

20 MIKE LEVIN: What I was just going to add is that my
21 experience around here and I think I've spoken with you
22 about this before, is it's preparation meeting
23 opportunity.

24 So, you know, we we have to continue to build
25 momentum for the effort and, and remain prepared with

1 with a good piece of legislation and we have to be
2 opportunistic about when we have a chance to get this
3 done.

4 Now, this bill requires a change in policy, so it
5 can't be done via budget reconciliation.

6 And that's an important distinction because that
7 means that you have to overcome a 60 vote threshold in
8 the Senate with the filibuster rather than a 50 vote
9 threshold.

10 So this is one that will need broad support in the
11 Senate and broad support in the House and move forward in
12 a, a bipartisan way in both houses.

13 And that takes time.

14 But at the end of the day, and, and that will
15 require, you know, changes, amendments, everybody's going
16 to have their ideas around this, but we all have to work
17 together with transparency and with that common goal of
18 solving this problem across the United States.

19 CHRIS WAHL: So I think that's a good, good segway
20 into what we can do to be helpful, what the folks on the
21 call can do to be helpful.

22 Our coalition had a major accomplishment this past
23 year is that and you know this Congressman, but we were
24 able to get the state legislature in both houses, both
25 the state Senate and the Assembly to pass a resolution

1 that essentially mirrored the bill that you have done.

2 So we were able to say California supports this
3 effort, which is really a nice opportunity.

4 We we need to do beyond that, right, beyond
5 California now.

6 So our coalition's finding ways to expand that.

7 But what else can we be doing to help you and help
8 the bill be successful?

9 MIKE LEVIN: I'd say two things Chris.

10 First is get your member of Congress to cosponsor
11 the bill.

12 So, you know, to the extent that, you know, people
13 on this Zoom have different members, encourage their
14 member to to cosponsor.

15 And we'll have to go through that, of course, again
16 after the end of the year, the beginning of the new year
17 with the bill reintroduction.

18 Number two is to the extent you have members that,
19 you know, who are not members of the Spent Nuclear Fuel
20 Solutions Caucus, get them to sign up for that.

21 And I think we have a roster on our website.

22 We can distribute the link around who's on it.

23 And, you know, we need Republicans, we need
24 Democrats.

25 We just need thoughtful people from across the

1 country with variety of background experience who want to
2 solve this issue.

3 Those are the two things that immediately come to
4 mind that ought to keep everybody busy for a while.

5 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, I was going to say, yeah,
6 exactly.

7 So thank you for that, that that's very helpful.

8 So just talking a little bit more about the
9 consent-based process because I think that's a very
10 important component of this.

11 What have you seen that has started to work around
12 the country in this discussion?

13 I know that there's been some work on these
14 consortia.

15 The Department of Energy has started.

16 We've been working, we talked about this at the
17 beginning very closely with, with Paul Murray at the DOE
18 who's been a great champion for this.

19 What do you think the next step is in that consent-
20 based siting process and, and how can that be helpful as
21 well to the legislation?

22 MIKE LEVIN: Well, Paul has been tremendous and I
23 really hope that he stays as a deputy assistant
24 secretary.

25 You know, he, he's just been such a great champion

1 and I, I really hope that folks like him there.

2 There are Paul Murrays all throughout the federal
3 government.

4 I hope they stay because we need them.

5 You know, my belief is that there are communities
6 across the country that will look at the cost benefit
7 analysis and understand, you know, in, in less
8 environmentally sensitive places that don't, for example,
9 like on the coast of Southern California, we have, you
10 know, earthquake faults, we have rising sea levels, we
11 have population density.

12 Other parts of the country that are not at risk as
13 much, you know, and, and they will look at this and say,
14 this is a, a way to generate economic opportunity and
15 jobs and growth.

16 And this is what we've seen in other parts of the
17 world that have successfully pulled off a spent nuclear
18 fuel strategy for, for disposal and for for repositories.

19 And you know, I think that what we're doing right
20 now with the consent-based siting process through DOE is
21 the road map.

22 Or what we ultimately need to do for a repository.

23 What what what we're doing with DOE I, I probably
24 should have explained this before.

25 So the 150 million give or take that we've funded

1 at DOE is for consent-based siting of a consolidated
2 interim storage site or sites.

3 Paul Murray, Ron, he might tell you you need four
4 or five of them across the country, different storage
5 sites.

6 And but what is instructed is that consent-based
7 model is exactly what we will need long term for a new
8 permanent repository as well.

9 Does that make sense?

10 CHRIS WAHL: It does.

11 MIKE LEVIN: And so it's critically important that,
12 you know, we, we, we learn from how this is going, we
13 iterate and ultimately codify this process as it pertains
14 to a permanent repository site.

15 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah.

16 And, and maybe we can talk a little bit because
17 you've become an expert in this area and...

18 MIKE LEVIN: I don't know.

19 CHRIS WAHL: But I, I think it is important to talk
20 about the difference between CIS and the permanent
21 repository side.

22 One of the, the, the pieces that was most
23 remarkable to me about what Paul Murray had mentioned at
24 a CEP hearing was is that Yucca would be great
25 theoretically, right?

1 But we need 2 Yuccas potentially, right?

2 And that was really eye opening to me.

3 And then when you start talking about the idea of
4 tripling the nuclear efforts in the United States, then
5 that, the back end, as you say, becomes very, very
6 important.

7 When we talk about this, can you talk a little bit
8 more about like the timetables of what, like what's
9 realistic for the group here in terms of CIS and
10 permanent repositories?

11 Because it's not tomorrow, as we know.

12 MIKE LEVIN: Well, this whole problem didn't take,
13 you know, a year or a decade to, to be created.

14 And and it's not going to take a year, a decade to
15 be completely fixed.

16 But we have to stop, you know, the inertia.

17 And we've got to continue to, to build momentum,
18 particularly, as you say, if, if the Trump administration
19 is going to embrace greater nuclear power production, it,
20 it right now we have about 100,000 metric tons of spent
21 nuclear fuel across the country that we have to address.

22 But as you correctly say, if we're going to be
23 doing a whole lot more than than, you know, if they
24 decide that's their strategy, it's wholly irresponsible
25 to, to employ that strategy and not fix the back end of

1 the fuel cycle.

2 You know, in terms of timing, I always say, you
3 know, I, I want this all solved before I qualify for
4 Medicare.

5 And I'm currently, I am, I am 46 years old.

6 We have a, a document that I'd be happy to
7 distribute to you and to the group where we outline the
8 various phases of the consent-based initiative that DOE
9 is undertaking.

10 And, and you know, we're talking about we're, we're
11 already approaching the end of the first phase of
12 education of different communities across the country who
13 might be interested in being a, a storage site.

14 And now we're we're embarking on the second phase,
15 which is contract negotiation.

16 So identification of those sites, a competitive
17 process to, to bid to be a site and then engaging in
18 contract negotiation, figuring out what it's going to
19 take and being pragmatic.

20 I will tell you that Jennifer Granholm has been
21 incredibly pragmatic about this.

22 And my hope is that the new secretary will share
23 that pragmatism.

24 I don't know him, but I look forward to getting to
25 know him because it's important we work together.

1 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, that was actually sort of nicely
2 segwayed into my next question, which was, is that
3 Secretary Granholm has been great.

4 She's been a great partner to work with.

5 As you know, she she joined the group and you
6 helped put together an event at SONGS to bring attention
7 to this particular issue.

8 What do we know about the the presumptive
9 secretary, Chris Wright?

10 Do we know much about him, or what have you, what
11 have you heard so far?

12 MIKE LEVIN: Well, there's certain things I'll just,
13 I'm going to level with everybody here.

14 There's certain things that concern me in terms of
15 his approach to climate change generally, you know, kind
16 of the lack of acknowledgement of the seriousness of of
17 the climate situation.

18 But we have to find areas of common ground.

19 And this is that area as far as I am concerned,
20 where we have to solve the spent nuclear fuel challenge
21 across the United States.

22 And, and I hope another area, and it's outside the
23 scope of this webinar, Chris, but I hope another area of
24 common ground is the need for dramatically increasing
25 transmission across the United States, because that's

1 another area where I have a bill that we have about 80
2 cosponsors.

3 And I'm, I'm leading the, the House Democrats on,
4 on that effort.

5 And again, totally beyond the scope of this, but if
6 we're going to dramatically increase the electrification,
7 we have to correspondingly increase the amount of
8 reliable transmission.

9 And if you want to build today, if you want to
10 build a multi-state transmission line, it's not so easy
11 to do it.

12 It's a lot easier to build a multi-state pipeline
13 than a multi-state transmission line.

14 And we have a bill to level the playing field on
15 that.

16 So I, I look forward to working with him and and
17 with whoever is at FERC.

18 You know, that's going to be the other thing is
19 there'll be new people there and, and all over.

20 So, you know, we just have to, as we did in 2021,
21 we have to reintroduce ourselves to lots and lots of
22 people.

23 But that's so...

24 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, no, no doubt.

25 And I agree with you on the electrification of, of

1 certainly the state and the country.

2 And, and hopefully I know that the current
3 president, President Biden, put a lot of money aside for
4 those IIRA dollars for infrastructure, IPS activities.

5 And I think many of us in California are hopeful
6 that those investments in energy, roads, water systems
7 will all will all continue to move forward because we
8 desperately need that.

9 MIKE LEVIN: I know we're trying to, we're trying to
10 get it all out the door.

11 CHRIS WAHL: I've heard that.

12 Yeah, that's great.

13 We're working on a few other projects that would be
14 helpful for that.

15 So I want to go back, if I can, to this single
16 purpose organization.

17 Our friend Tom Isaacs, who's been a great
18 discussion at Pasadena well is very, very well versed in
19 what's happening outside of the United States.

20 What type of international best practices have been
21 helpful for you to learn about that have led to the
22 development of the legislation?

23 MIKE LEVIN: Well, first of all, please say hi to
24 Tom.

25 I hope he's doing well.

1 It's been a while.

2 Finland and Canada immediately come to mind.

3 And you know, in Finland I've met with the the
4 government representatives and, and learned a bit about
5 what they've done.

6 You know we know that it basically came down to a
7 competition where a number of local communities actually
8 fought for the opportunity to host a repository.

9 In Canada, the nuclear waste management
10 organization has narrowed down from I think around 20
11 different potential sites down to two now, of course,
12 going from two to one, that's the hardest part.

13 So, you know, our, our fingers are crossed that
14 that succeeds.

15 But in speaking to my colleagues, some of the
16 Canadian government officials, that process, the consent-
17 based process has gone extraordinarily well.

18 Both of those, I think have served as a model for
19 DOE as they've looked at what's worked, what could have,
20 could have been done differently, what are best practices
21 and the work that DOE is doing because every country is
22 unique, right?

23 And, and you know, we have a unique system of
24 federalism in the United States and states' rights and,
25 and local jurisdictions.

1 And, and you know, what works in the U.S. may not
2 translate to what works in Finland or what works in
3 Canada.

4 But that's why it's so critically important that
5 DOE is embarking on a consent-based process right now or
6 a CIS that we can and will learn from as we move forward
7 on a consent-based process for a permanent repository.

8 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, that's great.

9 I'm going to move to the some of the audience
10 questions that we have because we get a lot of really
11 good input into that.

12 And I want to remind everyone that's on that,
13 please drop your questions in the chat and I'll do my
14 best to get to those as well.

15 So we have a hypothetical question, so I'm not
16 going to go down that entirely route, but it relates to
17 safety, right?

18 And it relates to this idea that how do we know
19 what we're doing is safe?

20 And when CIS does materialize, for example, if a
21 canister were to arrive that was defective, what happens
22 in that situation?

23 Does it get returned to sender?

24 Does it have to go to a different facility?

25 And I know that's kind of a hypothetical in the

1 weeds type question, but maybe you can talk a little bit
2 about safety and how we're going to ensure safety with
3 CIS and and ultimately the permanent repository.

4 MIKE LEVIN: Well, I have a different bill to have a
5 requirement of 100-year canister life and safety is
6 incredibly important to me.

7 I think it's important to all of us, particularly
8 those of us that live within ten, ten or fifteen minutes
9 of, of a, a, a spent nuclear fuel facility.

10 So I, I think that that's an area where we need
11 public feedback and input on the legislation.

12 We want to be incredibly mindful of the safety of
13 our communities and also transparency and accountability.

14 It has to be top of mind.

15 I have tried and I've met a lot of resistance just
16 to be honest, Chris, to do things like an Office of
17 Public Participation at the Nuclear Regulatory
18 Commission.

19 I think transparency is good.

20 You know, sunlight is, is good.

21 And I think that, you know, the more public is
22 aware, the better, which is why I think the work that you
23 are doing and that Dan is doing is very helpful.

24 You know, I, I think get the facts out there, talk
25 about things, you know, honestly and candidly.

1 And I think that that's ultimately how you build
2 trust and confidence.

3 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah.

4 You know, some of your colleagues have talked about
5 just kind of building off what you just said, that the
6 idea of new nuclear reprocessing.

7 Would you mind sharing with the group just some of
8 your perspectives and kind of maybe starting with what
9 new nuclear reprocessing is?

10 And then what is that?

11 How does that factor into the discussions that we
12 have moving forward?

13 MIKE LEVIN: Well, you know, many other countries
14 actively reprocess spent nuclear fuel.

15 You look at France, for example, I think their
16 power grid is roughly 60 or 70% nuclear.

17 And, and, you know, in the United States, we've
18 veered away from it because of the risk of nuclear
19 proliferation.

20 I think those are significant concerns that need to
21 be addressed and overcome.

22 I can tell you that, you know, folks like Chuck
23 Fleischmann and, and my Republican colleagues are very
24 much, you know, supportive of reprocessing.

25 I am also hopeful for nuclear innovation that, you

1 know, things like Bill Gates' TerraPower and small
2 modular reactor projects, things that are, that are safer
3 in the sense that they don't use water cooling, they use
4 molten salt or other, other forms of cooling and, and,
5 you know, can address some of the, the legacy challenges.

6 You know, I think all of these are parts of of the
7 the discussion.

8 You know, I am sometimes asked Chris, well, are you
9 pro-nuclear?

10 Are you against nuclear?

11 And it's I'm very clearly in one, one place, which
12 is we have to fix the waste issue.

13 If you don't fix the back end of the fuel cycle,
14 you should not be building until you do that.

15 And so that's where I have been and where I will
16 continue to be.

17 And we have to be open minded and thoughtful and we
18 have to, you know, listen to our friends and industry and
19 they need to be part of the solution as well.

20 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, yeah, for sure.

21 So part of this this journey we've been on, it's
22 been interesting to me because when you first start with
23 this concept of consent-based siting the idea, you sort
24 of think to yourself initially as well, who would want a
25 nuclear facility in their community?

1 But there are many examples of people raising their
2 hands under the right circumstances.

3 And one of the questions that we have from the
4 audience today is, is that what opportunity exists for a
5 state to establish an interim storage facility today
6 while waiting for the federal facility to be established?

7 Is there any pathway forward for a, for a city or
8 community that wants to raise its hand?

9 MIKE LEVIN: Well, you have to create that pathway
10 and you have to, you have to do it eyes wide open and be
11 respectful of all the communities that that may be
12 impacted.

13 You have to be thinking about tribal communities,
14 environmental justice concerns.

15 You have to, you know, again, sunlight is our
16 friend, you, you, we have to be transparent and
17 accountable.

18 What I do know is that there are certainly better
19 places in the United States for the 1,600 metric tons
20 that we have at SONGS that don't have all the
21 environmental challenges.

22 I should mention that in our bill in, in the
23 comprehensive bill, Nuclear Waste Administration Act, we
24 have incorporated the Spent Nuclear Fuel Prioritization
25 Act that I've introduced now a few times with my friend

1 Darrell Issa.

2 That basically says for all the sites across the
3 country, of which there are 70 or so, prioritize moving
4 the waste from those with the highest environmental risks
5 as determined by seismic risks and also national security
6 considerations.

7 The other thing that we have at San Onofre, of
8 course, is right across the street is one of the most
9 important bases for the readiness and preparation of our
10 military.

11 And so we we must consider that as well.

12 There are other sites too across the country that
13 have some of these concerns and and to the extent we find
14 storage sites, they have to be, you know, much lower in
15 terms of those concerns.

16 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, actually, I, I I think that's
17 another good point that you raised that that's also
18 interesting to me is, is that the military already
19 engaged in this activity today.

20 So it's not as if it's not something that's
21 happening in the United States.

22 Can you talk a little bit about how the military
23 moves spent fuel today and stores it itself?

24 MIKE LEVIN: Well, one of the cochairs of our task
25 force that we put together right after I, I was sworn in

1 office is Admiral Len Hering.

2 He's the Navy mayor of San Diego.

3 And Len, Admiral Herring, will tell you that the,
4 the Navy has all sorts of best practices for the
5 movement, transportation of, of spent nuclear fuel.

6 Now, it's not at the scale, but nonetheless they
7 have a great deal of experience in in transportation.

8 I should mention also a very important point on
9 transportation, that part of the \$150 million that I was
10 able to help secure with Chuck Fleischman goes to to fund
11 the completion of the development of something called the
12 Atlas railcar system.

13 That is a dedicated system developed by the
14 Department of Energy solely for the purpose of safely
15 transporting spent nuclear fuel.

16 And that system is pretty well developed now.

17 And, and I'm excited that they've been doing that
18 because that's that's critically important.

19 Now the Navy, they have experienced that, the, the
20 Defense Department has experienced moving around and
21 storing spent fuel.

22 Some then may reach the conclusion, well, then why
23 don't we just move everything to Camp Pendleton?

24 And the reason is that our Marine Corps, they do
25 not have the capacity or the ability to be managing

1 commercial spent nuclear fuel.

2 That is simply not as part of their mandate to to
3 have, you know, they are there to make marines at Camp
4 Pendleton and, and that is their primary objective.

5 And and that's, you know, until that changes, which
6 would require a whole variety of changes, that will
7 remain their core mission.

8 I think it's important to be mindful of that.

9 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, for sure.

10 And, and, and I I think it's helpful though in our
11 discussion, right, to be able to acknowledge that this is
12 happening today, right.

13 And that and it's done in a safe...

14 MIKE LEVIN: Absolutely, Chris, yes.

15 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, and, and I and I wanted to sort
16 of build on that just a little bit for a second.

17 And and, you know, there's there's this idea of
18 sort of worst-case scenario, right?

19 And people see, you know, earthquake scenarios that
20 that look horrible and whatnot.

21 And there are examples around the world that have
22 happened that that are not good for this.

23 But again, maybe talk a little bit more about sort
24 of the element of safety and how that's going to be done.

25 And I mean, when you hear Paul Murray talk about

1 it, there's a lot of focus on the fact that they're, all
2 those scenarios are analyzed, considered, contemplated in
3 this type of endeavor.

4 So maybe talk a little bit for those folks that are
5 worried about what may happen.

6 Worst case scenario, how are those scenarios being
7 contemplated and, and planned for?

8 MIKE LEVIN: Well, I, I just want to be clear eyed
9 about it.

10 You know, I, I want to level with folks and I will
11 not, you know, tell people there's no risk, but I also
12 will not tell people that there's an overwhelming risk.

13 The, the reality is that, you know, we know through
14 a lot of testing, I was just at the UC San Diego, the,
15 the shake test where where we were able to see a, a, a
16 shake table.

17 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, shake table demonstration.

18 MIKE LEVIN: The shake table demonstration where we
19 were able to see how a, a, you know, exact whole tech
20 canister was able to withstand the equivalent of a six or
21 seven magnitude earthquake.

22 And you know, the, the reality is that we live in,
23 in an area that is prone to earthquakes.

24 We just do.

25 We live in an area that is prone to sea level rise.

1 And you know, paradise has its challenges.

2 And so, you know, I think we would be naive not to
3 think that storing nuclear fuel there indefinitely is
4 without risk 'cause there is risk.

5 But is it so grave where, you know, we all have to
6 panic tomorrow?

7 I would say of course not.

8 The truth is somewhere in between, as it often is
9 in in challenging things.

10 What I, I can tell you this though, I am absolutely
11 dedicated to getting that waste off our coast as quickly
12 and as safely as we can.

13 And we really need to because there are far, far
14 safer, better places to store it.

15 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, for sure.

16 Thank you on that.

17 I, I want to make sure I'm reminding the audience,
18 just taking a quick break here that if you have any
19 questions, please put them in the chat.

20 We're, we're, I'm getting trying to do my best to
21 get through those questions.

22 Dan, I'll also break for just a second to see if
23 there any thoughts or questions that you have for the
24 congressman that, you know, in the work that you're doing
25 in the CEP, you're exposed to a lot of different people.

1 And you, you yourself have testified on Congress,
2 at Congress.

3 What what are other questions that you might have
4 for the congressman?

5 DAN STETSON: Thank you.

6 CHRIS WAHL: Oh, and and let me let me introduce,
7 let me interrupt for a second and say welcome..

8 MIKE LEVIN: Katrina, hello.

9 CHRIS WAHL: Supervisor Foley, she's one of our
10 cochairs for the Spent Fuel Solutions Coalition.

11 We're honored to have her here as well.

12 So thank you for joining Supervisor.

13 DAN STETSON: Congressman, a quick question.

14 As you know, there's over 40 some billion dollars
15 already in, the, the waste funds and I think it's
16 accumulating at something like \$1.8 billion per year.

17 Is this enough money to fund the activities that
18 that are proposed, under, under the bill?

19 MIKE LEVIN: More than enough, Dan, more than
20 enough.

21 All we would need for this bill, for this entire
22 endeavor, is the interest from this fund.

23 And I think that Teri Sforza, if you haven't seen
24 her article, she outlines it very well.

25 She talks about saving taxpayers.

1 So there's kind of two, at first, things that you
2 might think are incongruent.

3 You want to create a new agency.

4 Well, wait, don't we want to, you know, if you
5 listen to Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, they just want
6 to cut everything.

7 And that's the whole DOGE, you know, Department of
8 Government Efficiency and all this.

9 So we're saying create a new thing and that, oh,
10 some people say, I don't know if I want to create a new
11 thing, but it's create a new thing that will save money,
12 that will save a lot of money for taxpayers.

13 And when you say that, hopefully they'll be more
14 receptive, Dan.

15 DAN STETSON: I sure hope so.

16 That was one of the questions or a series of
17 questions that were asked of me when I was back there
18 before the congressional subcommittee and cost and it's
19 something like \$20 million a year that it cost to store
20 the spent fuel just at San Onofre.

21 And when you take that across the country, I mean,
22 it's, it's significantly more.

23 But with that, Chris, I'll turn it back over to
24 you.

25 Thank you, Congressman.

1 MIKE LEVIN: Thank you Dan.

2 CHRIS WAHL: I, I do think it's important that
3 people realize that we've been, we've been collecting on
4 these dollars for years, right, with the idea that we're
5 going to solve this problem.

6 And at one point this country felt it was Yucca.

7 That's not at least on the table today, could
8 potentially be down the road.

9 But we have this money been collecting, it's in the
10 bank and we're not creating a new energy or new
11 department, a new organization that's going to require
12 additional funding.

13 I, I appreciate your commitment to that.

14 MIKE LEVIN: Well, the biggest problem, Chris, is
15 everybody in the country thought it was Yucca, except the
16 Nevadans.

17 CHRIS WAHL: That's right.

18 MIKE LEVIN: That's, that's the critical missing
19 piece.

20 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah. So, well, this is great, kind of
21 winding down on some questions.

22 I do have just a few left though for you.

23 And is there anything else on your mind related to
24 to your legislation that we should be thinking about or
25 anything else that we can be doing to help as an

1 organization?

2 You kind of covered some of those already, but I
3 want to give you one more chance to to do that.

4 MIKE LEVIN: Again, bipartisan cosponsors and
5 bipartisan members of the Caucus.

6 And those will be our great efforts for for the new
7 year.

8 And if anybody watching, you know, maybe you have
9 some friend or family member who who knows one of these
10 new members of Congress across the country, you know,
11 we'll obviously be targeting our folks in California and
12 Chuck will be focused on his part of the country and, and
13 his committees and, and all the rest.

14 And we just have to keep at it.

15 And, you know, I think it's interesting, I think we
16 were up to around 30 members of the Caucus, but then I
17 think we've had a few people that have left Congress and
18 then we're going to have a lot more people that are
19 joining Congress.

20 The key is you have to have new people every every
21 couple years.

22 You're going to get new people coming in and, and
23 great colleagues that are leaving.

24 And you just have to continue to recycle the the
25 same, you know, flyer about why it's so important to join

1 this.

2 CHRIS WAHL: That's great.

3 Well, thank you for that.

4 We'll make sure to do those two things and I know
5 Jessica you're on who works with us very closely and
6 makes all this happen.

7 So I want to thank her and all of her efforts and
8 the team's efforts to make this together.

9 This has been one of our most successful webinars
10 and you mentioned the Teri Sforza article.

11 I appreciate that as well.

12 We'll make sure that that gets distributed to
13 everyone that's participated.

14 MIKE LEVIN: Thank you.

15 CHRIS WAHL: And Supervisor Foley, I want to turn it
16 over to you to see if you say remarks as well.

17 And just for those of you that don't know, as I
18 mentioned, Supervisor is a part of our executive board
19 and has really been a true champion for us as well and
20 has gone to D.C. to fight for legislation and been a
21 great ally and friend to to to Congressman Levin as well.

22 MIKE LEVIN: Can I before that, Katrina, I just want
23 to just thank you for just being a tremendous partner and
24 leader and advocate in our community.

25 And I'm so grateful as an Orange County resident to

1 have you as my supervisor.

2 And I'm, I'm grateful also to Jim Desmond for his
3 partnership and collaboration on this and, and look
4 forward to many productive discussions in the months and
5 years ahead.

6 Oh, you're muted.

7 CHRIS WAHL: I think you're on mute Supervisor.

8 MIKE LEVIN: Still can't hear you.

9 I don't know.

10 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, this, I had a little trouble too.

11 Zoom is a little different sometimes than Teams.

12 We're only four years into this, and I I admit it,
13 I I had it all screwed up, too, so hopefully you can make
14 it work here.

15 MIKE LEVIN: She has to be unmuted.

16 CHRIS WAHL: Ok.

17 Our team is it, can we unmute the supervisor from
18 our side?

19 Let's see, how about that work?

20 MIKE LEVIN: Nothing.

21 Feel free to mute me, Chris.

22 CHRIS WAHL: Jess, is it on our side or is it I see
23 here working that through?

24 JESSICA LUTERNAUER: Yeah, I'm not seeing that
25 option.

1 I can hit ask to unmute.

2 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, I tried that too.

3 OK, maybe it's on you guys, on the supervisor's
4 side, I think it's on your side of the technical part.

5 But so when does that, when what are the dates of
6 of the new session?

7 When does so the, the, the new administration start
8 being...

9 MIKE LEVIN: So the yeah, the hope is that we pass a
10 a continuing resolution to fund the government.

11 Now we're talking about doing that for three
12 months, getting that done before December 20.

13 That's when government funding runs out.

14 The end of the current Congress and the beginning
15 of the new Congress will be January 3rd, which is a
16 Friday.

17 And the certification of the presidential result
18 will be the following Monday, the 6th.

19 And then President-elect Trump's inauguration will
20 be on January the 20th, and it'll be here before you know
21 it.

22 Oh, there's Katrina again.

23 CHRIS WAHL: OK, let's try that again.

24 MIKE LEVIN: This time, we still can't hear it.

25 CHRIS WAHL: Oh, no.

1 Excuse me.

2 MIKE LEVIN: Mute me it says.

3 CHRIS WAHL: Yeah, so I I I think it's on, what
4 we're being told on...

5 SUPERVISOR KATRINA FOLEY: Ok, there we go.

6 CHRIS WAHL: There we go.

7 Yay, all right.

8 Oh, we're so happy to hear from you.

9 KATRINA FOLEY: It took the 18-year-old intern
10 staffer to figure it out.

11 So there we go.

12 CHRIS WAHL: So happy that worked out.

13 Well, welcome.

14 KATRINA FOLEY: Thank you.

15 What I was saying is thank you, Congressman.

16 Really appreciate all the work that you've done on
17 this issue.

18 But on many more, of course, I'm just here at OCTA
19 right now, just finishing up an OCTA meeting.

20 And so we know the work you've done to help us with
21 the...

22 MIKE LEVIN: A lot of work to do a lot of work to
23 do.

24 KATRINA FOLEY: Lots of work.

25 So thank you.

1 Thank you for all you're doing and we're here to
2 support you and we're here to help get your legislation
3 forward.

4 It's, it's critical that we do this as you know.

5 And I think that the time period we've been in,
6 'cause this group was formed in 2021, we've made a lot of
7 progress as things go.

8 You were able to introduce your legislation, the
9 Nuclear Waste Administration Act of 2024 in September of
10 last year.

11 And, and so championing this issue, it's a very
12 complicated, technically complicated issue.

13 It requires a lot of, I think a skill at listening
14 and understanding complicated analyses and, and being
15 able to take what is, I think, very complicated
16 information and transition it into simple speak so that
17 people can understand, people like me.

18 I'm an English major, not an engineer or a nuclear
19 physicist.

20 So, so I think we've done a good job and with your
21 leadership, we're gonna get this over the line.

22 And I also know that you're going to be bringing
23 forward some other partners this next year.

24 We also have some resolutions we're bringing
25 forward.

1 We got the state resolution to support your
2 efforts.

3 We, we're trying to get all 34 cities in Orange
4 County, and we are bringing forward a request from Orange
5 County Transportation Authority, the LOSSAN Board.

6 So we're trying to to get as much support from
7 interested stakeholders as we can to help support your
8 efforts.

9 So thank you so much for all you're doing.

10 MIKE LEVIN: Fantastic.

11 Thank you, Katrina.

12 Again, I'm so grateful to you and to the county and
13 we've got lots of interesting things to work on.

14 This is certainly at the top of the list, and, and
15 our rail corridor and all the challenges there are very
16 top of mind for me as well.

17 KATRINA FOLEY: Great.

18 I know what, that we want to make sure people know,
19 you can go to www.spentfuelsolutionsnow.com and that's
20 where we house a lot of the information about your
21 legislation, about just different webinars that we've
22 hosted, different countries that have already struggled
23 through this type of an issue and came out with great
24 solutions.

25 And so we encourage people to go to that website

1 and and get involved and help support the Congressman as
2 best you can to get this legislation passed.

3 MIKE LEVIN: Thank you.

4 CHRIS WAHL: Thank you so much and I want to thank
5 Dan, thank you so much, Supervisor Foley for joining.

6 And Congressman Levin, thank you for making time in
7 your busy schedule for us.

8 As I mentioned, this was one of our most successful
9 hearings or webinars that we've had.

10 We do these a couple times a year.

11 So thank you for this, super important, and we're
12 all behind you and we will be supporting you in 2025 on
13 this legislation.

14 And thank you for everyone for joining.

15 Much appreciated and I hope everyone has a great
16 day and a happy Thanksgiving.

17 KATRINA FOLEY: Happy Thanksgiving.

18 MIKE LEVIN: Happy Thanksgiving everyone.

19 Thank you all.

20 CHRIS WAHL: Thanks.

21 MIKE LEVIN: Bye.

22 CHRIS WAHL: Thanks so much.

23 Bye.

24

25