



# CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT ENTITY TO MANAGE U.S. USED NUCLEAR FUEL

**Position Statement**

**November 2009**

It is increasingly apparent that the United States will require a large expansion of nuclear power generation capacity to meet its future baseload electricity needs while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, Congress and the Administration must act to update U.S. nuclear fuel cycle policy to address these realities. This will likely require a multifaceted approach involving some combination of on-site/centralized dry cask interim storage, nuclear fuel recycling, and emplacement of high-level wastes in long-term geological storage.

Technologically proven solutions exist today that can safely and economically manage the flow of used nuclear fuel from the nation's current and planned nuclear power plants. As such, the so-called "nuclear waste problem" the United States faces is not the result of inadequate technical capabilities. Rather, it is largely a *political* problem, whereby parochial and ideological factions have successfully exploited U.S. legislative and administrative processes to prevent the U.S. Department of Energy from taking possession of used nuclear fuel.

In order to promote the primacy of scientifically sound and technically informed decision making in U.S. nuclear fuel cycle policy, the American Nuclear Society urges Congress and the Administration to consider the creation of an independent entity to oversee management of the current and expected stockpile of U.S. used nuclear fuel. Such an entity should possess the following characteristics:

- access to nuclear waste fees, not subject to annual congressional appropriations;
- governance that promotes long-range planning and continuity of leadership;
- authority to provide consolidated interim storage, nuclear fuel recycling, and geologic disposal consistent with laws, policies, and regulations;
- authority to support U.S. national security and nonproliferation objectives on a full-cost reimbursement basis;
- fully subject to U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulations.

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Related ANS Position Statements:

- *Nuclear Power: The Leading Strategy for Reducing Carbon Emissions*, Position Statement 44, Revised June 2006
- *Nuclear Fuel Recycling*, Position Statement 45, November 2005, Revised June 2007

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- *Nonproliferation*, Position Statement 55, November 2001, Revised November 2009
- *Fast Reactor Technology: A Path To Long-Term Energy Sustainability*, Position Statement 74, November 2005
- *International Cooperation for Expansion of Nuclear Energy*, Position Statement 79, June 2006

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The American Nuclear Society, founded in 1954, is a not-for-profit scientific and educational society of over 11,000 scientists, engineers, and educators from universities, government and private laboratories, and industry.

Position Statements are the considered opinions and judgments of the Society in matters related to nuclear science and technology. They are intended to provide an objective basis for weighing the facts in reaching decisions on important national issues.

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