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Joan Claybrook, President

## **Supposedly “Tight” FY06 Budget Wastes Taxpayer Money on Nuclear Power Industry**

### **Yucca Mountain**

The Bush Administration’s request for \$651 million for the Yucca Mountain Project – \$74 million more than the program received last year – is indefensible. After missing its December 2004 deadline for submitting its license application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, DOE is now saying that it intends to submit its application in December 2005. Yet, the Environmental Protection Agency has not yet reissued its public health standards for the site, as required by the DC Appellate Court’s decision last summer. Nor has EPA announced its timeline for this rulemaking. Even after the new rule is finalized, DOE must then revise its application to meet the new standard.

In addition, DOE and NRC have not yet agreed on the level of design detail that must be included in the application. And only \$14.1 million is allocated to the serious scientific questions that remain about the ability of the site to safely contain the highly radioactive waste, such as corrosion of the casks and contaminant migration through the ground. Yet, the Administration is attempting to put the cart before the horse: the budget gives a 197% funding boost to develop the transportation plans and infrastructure to Yucca, including developing the rail line in Nevada and designing and building new casks for transporting the waste to the site.

The Bush Administration is also requesting that the fees paid by nuclear power utility consumers into the Nuclear Waste Fund be reclassified as “offset collections.” Reclassifying the fund is simply a budgetary gimmick that obscures the country’s massive deficit. Last year, the budget request assumed that the Fund was reclassified, which requires legislation in both the House and Senate. While the House Energy & Commerce Committee passed a bill, it was never voted on in the full House or in the Senate. As a result, the project received \$303 million less than was requested in FY05.

### **Nuclear Power 2010**

The Bush Administration continues to push for the building of new nuclear reactors, despite the inherent waste, safety, security, cost, and proliferation problems of nuclear energy. The Administration is requesting \$56 million for the *Nuclear Power 2010* program, in which taxpayers pay for half of the cost of applying for licenses to site and build new nuclear reactors. In its request, the Administration stated the goal of the

program is to order a new reactor by 2009 and to have it built and operating by 2014. In FY05, the Administration requested \$10 million, but due to Sen. Domenici (R-NM), the program was appropriated \$50 million.

### **Generation IV**

The Bush Administration has requested \$45 million for Generation IV, a DOE program to develop new “inherently safe” reactor designs. In November 2004, the DOE contracted with Batelle Energy Alliance, LLC to manage the Idaho National Laboratory’s nuclear energy research laboratory, which head up the Generation IV program. In FY05, the Administration requested \$30.5 million, but due to Sen. Domenici (R-NM), the program received \$40 million.

### **Reprocessing**

The Bush Administration is requesting \$70 million for research and development of reprocessing technologies, which is \$2.5 million more than FY05. Reprocessing, a process in which plutonium is separated from spent fuel, creates serious environmental problems and proliferation risks. Tanks containing the waste created during reprocessing at Hanford in Washington and the Savannah River Site in South Carolina are leaking and threaten to contaminate important drinking water sources. Moreover, the only commercial reprocessing plant in the United States, at West Valley, NY, was an economic failure, in addition to being an environmental disaster.

### **Nuclear Hydrogen Initiative**

The Bush Administration is seeking \$20 million – a 124 percent increase from FY05 – for research and development on using nuclear power to co-generate hydrogen. Hydrogen has a long-term potential (in 50 years or more) to help reduce the country’s reliance on foreign oil, but using nuclear power or fossil fuel to produce hydrogen makes a mockery of these clean energy goals.

### **University Reactor Infrastructure and Education Assistance**

The Bush Administration is requesting \$24 million to fund universities to produce the next generation of nuclear scientists and engineers through grants, fellowships, and funding for infrastructure, as well as developing high school curriculum on nuclear energy. The goal of the project is to reverse the declining number of students in nuclear engineering and the number of nuclear engineering programs, which occurred during the 1980s and 1990s. This funding request is level with last year’s appropriation.