



**Contact: Tim Echols**  
Phone: 706-340-0773  
www.psc.state.ga.us

## Georgia Public Service Commission

244 Washington St S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
Phone: 404-656-4501  
Toll free: 800-282-5813

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**From the Office of Commissioner Tim Echols**

### **Commissioner Tim Echols Releases Synopsis of Spent Nuclear Fuel Management Symposium**

ATLANTA, August 31, 2011 – Commissioner Tim Echols recently conducted a symposium at Georgia Tech on Spent Nuclear Fuel Management and today releases the synopsis of the event for those who were unable to attend.

“This event provided an opportunity for experts to discuss what I believe is the most important energy question of our lifetime,” said Echols. “We must change our approach to nuclear waste so that we can recover the remaining energy and decrease the amount of final waste.”

Summary Report on the Symposium on Sustainable Nuclear Fuel Management, August 23, 2011 Georgia  
Institute of Technology

The Symposium’s main focus was on the current state of spent nuclear fuel management and options for future management. Presenters provided an understanding of their organization’s role in the development of ultimate long-term solutions available for storing spent nuclear fuel (“SNF”).

Georgia Tech professor Bojan Petrovic presented a thorough summary of the nuclear fuel cycle. This theme was repeated several times throughout the day but with emphasis placed on the value of that information to each presenter’s respective organization. There are 104 reactors currently in the US with only one under construction. The two at Vogtle are not considered to be under construction until they receive their COL (“Combined License”) from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (“NRC”).

Dr. Per Peterson of the Blue Ribbon Commission (“BRC”) on America’s Nuclear Future provided a quick overview of BRC’s recently released draft report. Dr. Peterson stressed the most important first step dealing with the SNF situation in the U.S. is amending the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (“NWPA”) to create a separate organization to manage the country’s nuclear fuel waste and to set forth how the Nuclear Waste Funds (“NWF”) are to be dispersed. Brittain Hill with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (“NRC”) spoke to the need for new regulation under consideration to address some of the country’s concerns regarding safety regulation of SNF. Mr. Hill stated that at this time, the NRC has insufficient regulations in place for the safe transport of SNF to an interim national repository and for the reprocessing of SNF. Department of Energy (“DOE”) staff member Mike Goff from the Idaho National Laboratory who specializes in fuel cycle research provided a brief summary of the lab’s work and his positions regarding the direction to pursue for the disposal of SNF.

Mick Mastilovic, Manager of Nuclear Fuel Supply with the Tennessee Valley Authority (“TVA”) gave an overview and footprint of its service area which contains the only plant under construction. TVA also indicated it is currently evaluating the need for additional units. Southern Nuclear Operating Company (“SNOC”) spokesman John Pemberton talked about its three nuclear plant sites, two in Georgia and one in Alabama, and its efforts through litigation with the federal government to recover the cost of storing its nuclear waste. Additionally, he presented the Company’s plan for interim dry cask storage and described the type of dry cask selected for use at all their sites, and stated SNOC is to receive a \$17 million reimbursement from DOE for Yucca Mountain costs.

Retired Admiral James Ellis, the current CEO of The Institute for Nuclear Power Operations (“INPO”), gave an in-depth presentation of his organization’s role and responsibility in the industry. INPO is an independent non-profit organization entity funded voluntarily by all U.S. utilities currently operating nuclear generating facilities. It has no association with any federal or state agency. He stressed INPO’s mission of safety, excellence, and cooperation among the utilities. To accomplish its mission INPO issues nuclear site construction and operation principles which all members are required to implement and adhere. Admiral Ellis himself conducts regular meetings with member company CEOs about their nuclear operations and specifically identifies those companies’ which are believed not to meet INPO standards.

The French Consul General of Atlanta, Mr. Pascal Le Deunff, provided a brief summary of French involvement in nuclear energy which he said provides approximately 80% of France’s electric energy needs. Paul Murray, Technical Director for Strategic Projects with Areva, said the company is currently in the process of attempting to sign partners to facilitate the construction of a mixed oxide fuel (“MOX”) facility at a cost of approximately \$20 billion. Areva’s idea would be to acquire the SNF from U.S. nuclear operators, reprocess that fuel, and then sell back the usable product. Heritage Foundation speaker, Mr. Jack Spencer, presented arguments for privatizing the SNF storage and/or reprocessing function. His primary reasons for moving to this type of model are that DOE has not demonstrated the ability to timely and effectively take possession of the SNF as required under law and that introducing competition to the function would improve innovation in both storage and reprocessing solutions and drive costs down.

Mr. Ed Davis of the Pegasus Group discussed DOE’s decision to declare Yucca Mountain unsatisfactory for a permanent SNF repository. His primary position was that DOE has provided no scientific basis for their decision and has not demonstrated the legal authority for making such a decision. Lastly, Mr. Brian O’Connell of the National Association of Regulatory Commissions (“NARUC”) summarized his organization’s legal challenges to the ending of Yucca Mountain as a permanent SNF repository. One point that both these speakers stressed is that the monies paid into the NWF were never separate and distinct from any other funds received by DOE and therefore, the monies are not ‘there’ so to speak and would have to be appropriated by Congress. An estimate to date of the total funds submitted to DOE for the NWF is approximately \$28 billion excluding interest.

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Organizing Committee Co-Chairs:

Tim G. Echols, Commissioner, Georgia PSC  
Farzad Rahnema, Professor and Chair of the Nuclear and Radiological Engineering/Medical Physics Programs,  
Georgia Institute of Technology

Commissioner Echols is the newest member of the Georgia Public Service Commission, having been elected statewide to a six-year term in November, 2010. His complete biography is at <http://tiny.cc/y5ktq>. The Commission web site is [www.psc.state.ga.us](http://www.psc.state.ga.us).

For more information on the Commission, visit our web site at [www.psc.state.ga.us](http://www.psc.state.ga.us).

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