



SONGS Community Engagement Panel Meeting

Solving the U.S. Nuclear Waste Challenge:
A Dialogue on the Path Forward
4 June 2026

Key Takeaways

The SONGS CEP and Spent Fuel Solutions coalition hosted a joint panel discussion on recent developments in pursuit of the offsite disposition of used nuclear fuel in the US. Momentum is building across the public and private sectors around Department of Energy (DOE) programs supporting Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campuses that include disposal.

Representative Mike Levin (CA-49) delivered opening remarks, stating at least four states were open to disposal as part of hosting Innovation Campuses, awardees may be announced in July, and that groundbreaking may start as early as 2027. The Congressman said prioritizing used fuel from shutdown sites like San Onofre will be a central part of a bipartisan legislative effort that also will seek to create a single-purpose entity to take over management of the US used fuel program. Finally, he mentioned his work to help secure \$112 million in appropriations in a 2027 bill to support the current used fuel management program within DOE.

The panel discussion focused on the need for (1) a new single-purpose entity not subject to election cycles to manage the transportation, interim storage and disposal facilities for used fuel; (2) reliable funding; and (3) the importance of trust and demonstrated competence.

Panelists were Allison Macfarlane, former NRC Chair and member of the president's Blue-Ribbon Commission (BRC) on America's Nuclear Future; Lake Barrett, former DOE senior official in the Office of Nuclear Energy; and Tom Isaacs, Independent Advisor to SCE for Nuclear Waste, former senior DOE official, lead advisor to the BRC, and for over 20 years, Chair of the Site Selection Review Group within the Canadian Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

In January, Macfarlane and Barrett published *The Path Forward for Nuclear Waste in the US* report which calls for a well-funded NuCorp to manage the used fuel program. The panel discussed the window of opportunity to realize used fuel disposal, key features of a successful US program, lessons learned, and strategic considerations.

SCE updated the community on a Severity Level IV non-cited violation from the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission due to a low-level solid radioactive waste shipment from SONGS to a storage facility in Utah that did not meet a <1% liquid content requirement. There was no leak, nor consequences to public health or safety. Corrective actions have been implemented.

This summer, SCE will make improvements to the beach walkway to ensure public access from the north to the south end of San Onofre State Beach. More rip-rap will be added along the walkway. The seawall is in good condition and out of scope.

Shareables

- Check out the bipartisan report, [The Path Forward for Nuclear Waste in the US](#)
- Join the [Spent Fuel Solutions coalition](#) and support efforts to clear San Onofre of used fuel
- Learn about how used fuel is safely stored at San Onofre by visiting the [SONGS website](#)