

Community Engagement Panel Meeting
US Department of Energy Used Nuclear Fuel Project Updates
Thursday, August 27, 2026, 2:00 – 4:30 pm (PT) via Microsoft Teams
Meeting Minutes

1) Community Engagement Panel (CEP) member attendance:

- 1) Present: Dan Stetson (CEP Chairman/Trustee-Executive Director, Nicholas Endowment), Hon. Victor Cabral (CEP Vice Chairman/San Clemente Council Member), Martha McNicholas (CEP Secretary), Michelle Anderson (Orange County Sheriff's Department, Emergency Management Director), Garry Brown (Orange County Coastkeeper), Scott Kibbey (California State Parks, South Sector Superintendent), Rob Howard (City of Oceanside Representative), Daniel Whitley (Camp Pendleton Community Plans and Liaison Officer), Ted Quinn (American Nuclear Society), Hon. John Taylor (San Juan Capistrano City Council), Captain Mel Vernon (San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians), Hunter McDonald (alternate for Hon. Jim Desmond, San Diego County Supervisor, 5th District), and Alyssa Napuri (alternate for Hon. Katrina Foley, Orange County Supervisor, 5th District).
- 2) Absent: Jim Desmond, (San Diego County Supervisor, 5th District and Spent Fuel Solutions coalition Co-chair), Mike Balsamo (Sr. VP, Government Relations Rancho Mission Viejo and South Orange County Economic Coalition Board Member), Hon. Michael Villar (Dana Point City Council), Lisa Davis (President, Capistrano Unified School District Board of Trustees), Valentine "Val" Macedo (Laborers' International Union of North America, Local 89), Hon. Katrina Foley, (Orange County Supervisor, 5th District and Spent Fuel Solutions coalition Co-chair),
- 3) SCE Representatives: Fred Bailly (SCE Vice President of Generation and Chief Nuclear Officer) Joe Nowak (Executive Sponsor, San Onofre Decommissioning Solutions), Chad Samples (SCE Project Manager, Mike Bryson (SCE Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation Engineer), and Manuel Camargo (SCE Principal Manager, Strategic Planning and Stakeholder Engagement)
- 4) Guest Speakers: Jorge Narvaez (Office of Spent Fuel and High-Level Waste Disposition, Office of Storage and Transportation, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Nuclear Energy) and Juan Uribe (Acting Director, Office of Disposal Research and Development, Office of Spent Fuel and High-Level Waste Disposition, Office of Nuclear Energy, U.S. DOE)

2) Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams convened by Chairman Stetson at 2:00 p.m.

NOTE: VIDEO OF THIS MEETING, SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS, AND A TRANSCRIPT ARE AVAILABLE [HERE](#); THIS DOCUMENT PROVIDES A SUMMARY

The SONGS CEP hosted a [virtual meeting](#) with updates from DOE on: (1) the Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campus initiative that includes used fuel disposal and (2) automated canister monitoring technology for multipurpose canisters that may be demonstrated at SONGS in 2027.

Juan Uribe explained that the DOE NLIC initiative offers an attractive value proposition to host states and communities, with used fuel disposal facilities as part of a broader fuel cycle design that offers thousands of permanent jobs, billions in tax revenue, and considerable capital investment. Some 26 states responded to an RFI and in July DOE signed MOUs with Utah, Idaho, Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. Hosting agreements with a subset of final states are expected to be executed as early as the end of September. The federal government must be prepared to enter transparent and enforceable long-term partnerships. If so, one or more of these Innovation Campuses may take SONGS used fuel as feedstock for recycling and reprocessing into fresh fuel.

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Mike Bryson and Jorge Navaez discussed that while SCE and other utilities continue to use robotic inspections for canisters, DOE is looking ahead to the prospect of co-locating canisters from reactor sites across the country, for which a scalable, automated monitoring approach can offer greater efficiency. A demonstration project is anticipated to take place at SONGS in 2027 using a test canister that is artificially heated, does not contain used fuel, and therefore is easier for workers to handle. If successful, the CEP postulated whether the NRC could eventually revise its regulatory framework such that the technology could be rolled out to commercial nuclear plants nationwide.

SCE updated the community on a recent detection of the smell of diesel fuel and an elevated volatile organic compound that prompted notification of a state agency which triggered an NRC notice. This was a non-radiological matter with no risk to workers or the public.

A decommissioning general contractor representative explained a recent penetration of a wall in a basement below the water table. Groundwater from the basement is being included in batch releases which will increase in volume and frequency until the hole is patched. Processed water is sampled and analyzed prior to release, with a focus on adjusting pH, and ensuring total suspended solids are within regulatory limits (tritium levels are a small fraction of regulatory limits). All releases remain within safe regulatory limits.

Shareables

- Read the [DOE news release](#) on state finalists for Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campuses
- Learn about the prospect of [automated monitoring](#) of used nuclear fuel canisters
- Join the [Spent Fuel Solutions coalition](#) and support efforts to clear San Onofre of used fuel
- Plan to tune in to the [SFS webinar](#) titled “Governing Long Promises: The Long Arc of US Spent Fuel Policy” with anthropologist and former DOE official Vincent Ialenti at 8 am PT on Sept. 10
- Learn about how used fuel is safely stored at San Onofre by visiting the [SONGS website](#)

3) Manuel Camargo (SCE) facilitated the public comment period on behalf of Victor Cabral and Martha McNicholas

- a) Nina Babiarz (Public Watchdogs) – Who provides answers to technical questions?

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.