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GOVERNOR OTTER RECEIVES PROGRESS REPORT FROM NUCLEAR COMMISSION; APPLAUDS EFFORT TO ANSWER TOUGH QUESTIONS



(BOISE) - Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter today encouraged the people of Idaho to review the progress of his Leadership in Nuclear Energy (LINE) Commission and to begin a public dialogue on critical questions facing the Idaho National Laboratory and their potential impact on Idaho's economy.

"The timing was right for an extensive, external review of INL and nuclear-related activities in Idaho," Governor Otter said. "I think this progress report clearly points out that the environmental cleanup envisioned by my predecessors has largely been realized while at the same time we've established INL as the nation's preeminent nuclear research and development laboratory. There's been significant economic benefit to the entire state. As we sustain and even try to build on that in the future, the Commission is working to answer some tough questions and I applaud its effort to involve the public in that discussion before making final recommendations."

LINE Commission Chairman Jeffery Sayer, director of the Idaho Department of Commerce, established five subcommittees that performed detailed research on key topics. Non-Commission members with valuable knowledge and perspectives were invited to participate in the subcommittee process. Subcommittees came up with more than 60 recommendations for the public and the full Commission to consider.

"While the findings and recommendations of the various subcommittees are preliminary, in keeping with its commitment to an open and inclusive process the LINE Commission believes that public review and comment at this juncture will provide valuable insights necessary to complete a final report," Chairman Sayer said. "Specifically, the Commission is looking for comments on seven challenging questions facing the INL and the nuclear industry - and how the State of Idaho can navigate through those challenges."

In its final report to the Governor, the Commission will use the subcommittee recommendations, input from the public and its own deliberations to finalize recommendations on the following questions:

1. What strategic role can the INL and Idaho's nuclear industry play in the country's energy future?
2. In light of reduced federal spending, what impacts may affect INL and what role can Idaho play to protect INL research and cleanup funding?

3. What broad environmental risks are posed by nuclear technologies and what mitigating steps are reasonable to protect public health and the environment from current and future applications of nuclear technology in Idaho?
4. Where is nuclear technology going and what role and/or opportunities exist for INL and Idaho companies in those technology developments?
5. Given the Blue Ribbon Commission focus on consent-based siting and the suspension of the Yucca Mountain repository, in what way can Idaho's 1995 Settlement Agreement protect the State's interests to support and enhance research and development at INL and complete the cleanup mission?
6. How can Idaho's universities influence, support and participate in the future of nuclear energy, nuclear workforce development, and advancements in nuclear technologies?
7. Following the impacts of the Fukushima tsunami and the recent market impact of natural gas, what future role will nuclear energy play in the nation's energy policies and what can Idaho do to prepare for that future?"

"The conversation about nuclear energy in Idaho is of utmost importance; thus, the entire state and interested national parties need to be included," Sayer said. "Receiving meaningful feedback from interested parties will be a valuable resource for the Commission as it develops final recommendations to the Governor."

The LINE Commission's Progress Report and the complete subcommittee recommendations are available on the LINE Commission's Web site at www.line.idaho.gov <<http://www.line.idaho.gov>>. Public comments can be submitted to the Commission on that same Web site or through the U.S. mail at:

LINE Commission c/o Idaho Department of Commerce 700 W State St. PO Box 83720 Boise, ID 83720-0093

Please submit comments by close of business on Friday, January 4, 2013. Comments received will be considered by the Commission as it prepares a final report to the Governor, which will be submitted by January 31, 2013.

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EDITORS: Attached to this news release are answers to frequently asked questions about the LINE Commission process.

LINE COMMISSION PROGRESS REPORT Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the purpose of the LINE Commission?

A. Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter created the LINE Commission in recognition of the important role nuclear activities play in Idaho's economy - and of the uncertain future facing nuclear energy, nuclear waste management and federal funding for nuclear research. The Commission was charged with making recommendations on policies and actions the State of Idaho can take to support and enhance the long-term viability and mission of the Idaho National Laboratory and the broader nuclear industry in the state.

Q. What has the LINE Commission's work involved so far?

A. The work of the Commission up to this point has been focused on fact finding and initial data analysis. To assist in these efforts, national and local experts were sought on every major topic. The Commission was fortunate to receive support, briefing materials and formal testimony from some of the most highly regarded government, regulatory, academic and industry leaders in the nation. Meetings were held around the state (Boise, Idaho Falls, Twin Falls, and Moscow) to ensure the Commission also was able to hear from citizens across all regions regarding their thoughts and observations.

Q. What is included in this "Progress Report"?

A. The progress report includes a letter to the citizens of Idaho from LINE Commission Chairman Jeff Sayer inviting them to review the initial subcommittee recommendations. Since this is Idaho's first extensive external review of INL's current mission, cleanup progress with legacy wastes, and an analysis of the Lab's and the broader Idaho nuclear industry's future opportunities, the Commission developed a white paper to help the public better understand the context for subcommittee recommendations that were developed. The subcommittee recommendations are then included in their entirety.

Q. Why were five subcommittees formed?

A. The Commission established subcommittees to perform detailed research on key topics essential to the Commission's work. Non-Commission members with valuable knowledge and perspective were invited to participate in the subcommittee process to extend the expertise available to the Commission. The subcommittees were able to more thoroughly examine areas of technology, infrastructure, environment and safety, education and workforce development, and the national and global landscape relative to nuclear research and development and the industry.

Q. Are the subcommittee recommendations the final recommendations to the Governor?

A. No. It is important to note that these subcommittee reports only reflect the respective deliberations and recommendations of each subcommittee to the full Commission, and should not be construed as the final recommendations of the LINE Commission to the Governor. Both the full Commission and the public will have the next 30 days to review the subcommittee recommendations and how those relate to the overarching questions the Commission is analyzing for the Governor.

Q. With the release of this progress report, what are the LINE Commission's next steps?

A. The next major step is development of final recommendations based on this progress report with the subcommittee recommendations, public comment and further deliberations of the full Commission. In its final report, the Commission's goal is to provide an analysis of a number of critical questions that will affect the future of the Idaho National Laboratory and the broader nuclear industry in Idaho.

Q. Why were the Commission meetings held during the day when most people had to work and were unable to attend?

A. In deference to the schedules of the very busy national experts who were so important to Commission fact-finding, meetings were held around airline flight schedules. That necessitated daytime meetings. Still, public input was and continues to be critical to the process. Time was extended in each meeting for public comment and a Commission Web site was established to encourage additional comment and to serve as a repository for all the key documents associated with the Commission's work for the public's review.

Q. How can the public provide additional input or input for the first time?

A. Comments can be submitted to the Commission via the LINE Commission Web site at www.line.idaho.gov<<http://www.line.idaho.gov>>, or through the U.S. mail at:

LINE Commission c/o Idaho Department of Commerce 700 W State St. PO Box 83720 Boise, ID 83720-0093

Q. How long is the public comment period?

A. The public comment period begins with the release of the progress report, and comments must be submitted by of business on Friday, January 4, 2013. Comments received will be considered by the Commission as it prepares its final report to the Governor, which will be submitted by January 31, 2013.

Editorial Date November 8, 2012
By Brad Bugger