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Idaho Site Completes Cleanup Milestone Ahead of Schedule

Idaho Falls, ID – The Department of Energy's Idaho Operations Office, through the efforts of its cleanup contractor, CH2M-WG Idaho (CWI), recently reached a key cleanup milestone three weeks ahead of schedule by completing the transfer of nearly 6.6 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel from wet to dry storage.

"The transfer of spent nuclear fuel from wet to dry storage represents a major contract milestone completion by CWI, a five year endeavor," said Jim Cooper, DOE-ID Acting Deputy Manager for the Idaho Cleanup Project. "Completion of this campaign places the spent fuel in a safer configuration for the environment, complies with DOE's commitment to the State of Idaho as agreed to in the 1995 Settlement Agreement, and represents good stewardship in protecting the Snake River Plain Aquifer."

"Finishing this campaign represents completion of another significant milestone for DOE and CWI," added CWI Director Phil Breidenbach. "It's the result of the effort of hundreds of men and women over the last five years. They completed the work safely and ahead of schedule and showed great teamwork and ingenuity along the way."

The transfer of spent nuclear fuel from large, water filled pools at the Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center's Fluorinel Dissolution Process and Fuel Storage Facility to dry storage areas demonstrates DOE's commitment to safely manage the country's spent nuclear fuel. While pools serve as an effective shield for radiation, dry storage prevents the fuel from degrading as quickly and is recognized as the preferred method of safely storing spent nuclear fuel long term.

More than half of the spent nuclear fuel transferred to dry storage originated from the Advanced Test Reactor (ATR), which is the world's largest test reactor located at the Idaho National Laboratory.

The Idaho Cleanup Project (ICP), which is funded by DOE's Office of Environmental Management, is focused on reducing risks associated with Cold War legacy materials and protecting the Snake River Plain Aquifer, the sole drinking water source for more than 300,000 residents of eastern Idaho, from contamination. The ICP is taking steps to meet milestones agreed to in the 1995 Settlement Agreement between the Navy, the DOE, and the State of Idaho. One of the key milestones is the transfer of all spent nuclear fuel to dry storage by December 31, 2023.

CH2M-WG Idaho, LLC, directs the Idaho Cleanup Project, the safe, environmental cleanup of DOE's Idaho National Laboratory site, located 45 miles west of Idaho Falls. The 7-year, $2.9 billion project, funded through the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management, focuses on early risk reduction and protection of the Snake River Plain Aquifer.

For additional information about the Idaho Cleanup Project, visit https://idahocleanupproject.com

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By Brad Bugger