

City of Idaho Falls Signs Letter to Increase DOE EM Funding to Create Jobs, Infrastructure



IDAHO FALLS -- Recently, a broad coalition of labor, community and industry organizations prepared a [letter](#) urging Congress to provide a much-needed economic boost to some of the regions hardest hit by the current pandemic through a one-time \$7.25 billion increase in funding for the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Environmental Management (EM) program.

The funding, which could be spent in the near future, will help reignite the national economy, assist in reviving small businesses, and create thousands of new jobs. At the same time, it could reduce one of the federal government's largest liabilities, accelerate the national defense mission, and build a nuclear workforce for the future.

The letter was signed by 17 organizations including the Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO, North America's Building Trades Unions, the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA), and Energy, Technology and Environmental Business Association (ETEBA).

"We have worked to improve coordination among federal, state and local government leaders, contractors, unions, communities and economic development entities, resulting in real progress," the letter states. "However, we must remain committed to reducing one of the country's largest



Published online: May 18, 2020

environmental and financial liabilities to drive the innovations and technological advancements for America's future."

According to the letter, DOE can successfully manage increased funding and leverage it for future economic development as it has in the past:

"The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) allowed DOE to speed up decontamination and demolition at numerous sites and award more contracts to private industry and small businesses to hasten the clean-up of legacy nuclear waste. During ARRA, EM proved a worthy investment: the program received \$6 billion and was able to reduce the program's future financial liabilities by \$13 billion through the acceleration of cleanup work. EM contractors alone hired over 20,000 new workers, putting them to back to work to reduce the overall cleanup complex footprint by 688 square miles while strengthening local economies."

The letter identified dozens of high-impact projects that EM could initiate and complete with the \$7.25 billion for the Hanford Site, **Idaho Cleanup Project**, Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Los Alamos Legacy Cleanup, Nevada, Oak Ridge, Paducah, Portsmouth, **West Valley**, and Savannah River Site.

"In Idaho Falls, we are definitely supportive of obtaining any funding that will help keep the Idaho Clean-up Project operating at, or ahead of schedule so that the desert site may be cleared as rapidly as possible and returned to other uses and/or its natural state," said Idaho Falls Mayor Rebecca Casper. " We are very close to having that done, so it is smart to keep that momentum going and keep the expert and dedicated members of the ICP workforce going full steam ahead at our key cleanup sites."

The 17 organizations and local governments signing the letter include:

- Energy Communities Alliance (ECA)
- Energy, Technology and Environmental Business Association (ETEBA)
- Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO
- United Steelworkers Local 12-9477
- **City of Idaho Falls, Idaho**
- City of Paducah, Kentucky
- **Town of Ashford, New York**
- Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC)
- Greater Paducah Economic Development
- Hanford Communities
- McCracken County, Kentucky
- North America's Building Trades Unions
- Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce
- Paducah Area Community Reuse Organization (PACRO)
- **Regional Economic Development for Eastern Idaho (REDI)**
- Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization (SRSCRO)
- Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness (CNTA)