

AMENDMENT NO. 348

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 348 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 854. A bill to establish a new organization to manage nuclear waste, provide a consensual process for siting nuclear waste facilities, ensure adequate funding for managing nuclear waste, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in introducing the Nuclear Waste Administration Act, a bill to establish a national nuclear waste policy.

This bipartisan legislation, which has been years in the making, is also cosponsored by Senators MARIA CANTWELL, LISA MURKOWSKI, and LAMAR ALEXANDER.

This legislation represents our best attempt to establish a workable, long term nuclear waste policy for the United States, something our Nation lacks today. It does so by implementing the unanimous recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future.

First, the bill would create a new independent entity, the Nuclear Waste Administration, with the sole purpose of managing nuclear waste.

Second, the bill would authorize the siting and construction of two types of waste facilities: permanent repositories for disposal and interim facilities for storage, including a pilot facility prioritizing waste from shut down reactors.

Third, the bill creates a consent-based siting process for both storage facilities and repositories, based on other countries' successful efforts.

The legislation requires that local, tribal, and State governments must consent to host waste facilities by signing incentive agreements, assuring that waste is only stored in the States and communities that want and welcome it.

Fourth, the bill would resume collection of the nuclear waste management fees from nuclear power ratepayers at a rate of 1/10 of a cent per kilowatt-hour, or about \$750 million annually, and would rededicate these revenues to the Nuclear Waste Administration to fund construction of waste facilities.

Finally, the legislation ensures the Nuclear Waste Administration will be

held accountable for meeting Federal responsibilities and stewarding Federal dollars.

The Nuclear Waste Administrator will be appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. The administration will be overseen by a five-member Nuclear Waste Oversight Board, modeled on the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board and will have an Inspector General. The administration will collect fees from nuclear utilities to pay for the development of storage and disposal facilities; those fees will be immediately available without appropriation, unless otherwise limited in an appropriations or authorization act. The current balance of the Nuclear Waste Fund, now valued at \$32 billion, will be available by appropriation only. Finally, if the agency fails to open a nuclear waste facility by 2025, fees paid by utilities will cease to be collected.

The United States has 99 operating commercial nuclear power reactors that supply 1/3 of our electricity and 3/4 of our emissions-free power.

However, production of this nuclear power has a significant downside: it produces nuclear waste that will take hundreds of thousands of years to decay. Unlike most nuclear nations, the United States has no program to consolidate waste in centralized facilities.

Instead, we leave the waste next to operating and shut down reactors sitting in pools of water or in cement and steel dry casks. Today, nearly 74,000 metric tons of nuclear waste is stored at commercial reactor sites. This total grows by about 2,000 metric tons each year.

In addition to commercial nuclear waste, we must also address waste generated from having created our nuclear weapons stockpile and from powering our Navy.

The byproducts of nuclear energy represent some of the nation's most hazardous materials, but for decades we have failed to find a solution for their safe storage and permanent disposal. Most experts agree that this failure is not a scientific problem or an engineering impossibility; it is a failure of government.

Although the Federal Government signed contracts committing to pick up commercial waste beginning in 1998, this waste program has failed to take possession of a single fuel assembly.

Our government has not honored its contractual obligations. We are routinely sued, and we routinely lose. So today, the taxpayer is paying power plants to store the waste at reactor sites all over the Nation. This has cost us \$4.5 billion so far, and our liability continues to grow each day. The lack of action is estimated to cost taxpayers another \$22.6 billion between now and 2065 if the government can start taking possession of waste in 2021. Further delays will only increase these costs.

We simply cannot tolerate continued inaction.

In January 2012, the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Fu-

ture completed a 2-year comprehensive study and published unanimous recommendations for fixing our Nation's broken nuclear waste management program.

The commission found that the only long-term, technically feasible solution for this waste is to dispose of it in a permanent underground repository. Until such a facility is opened, which will take many decades, spent nuclear fuel will continue to be an expensive, dangerous burden.

That is why the commission also recommended that we establish an interim storage facility program to begin consolidating this dangerous waste, in addition to working on a permanent repository.

Finally, after studying the experience of all nuclear nations, the commission found that siting these facilities is most likely to succeed if the host States and communities are welcome and willing partners, not adversaries. The commission recommended that we adopt a consent based nuclear facility siting process.

Senators ALEXANDER, MURKOWSKI, CANTWELL, and I introduce this legislation in order to begin implementing those recommendations, putting us on a dual track toward interim and permanent storage facilities. The bipartisan bill is the product of thoughtful collaboration, building on our work last Congress with Senator WYDEN and before that with former Senator BINGAMAN in the 112th Congress.

In my view, one of the most important provisions in this legislation is the pilot program to immediately begin consolidating nuclear waste at safer, more cost-efficient centralized facilities on an interim basis. The legislation will facilitate interim storage of nuclear waste in above-ground canisters called dry casks. These facilities would be located in willing communities, away from population centers, and on thoroughly assessed sites.

Some members of Congress argue that we should ignore the need for interim storage sites and instead push forward with a plan to open Yucca Mountain as a permanent storage site.

Others argue that we should push forward only with repository plans in new locations.

But the debate over Yucca Mountain, a controversial waste repository proposed in the Nevada desert, which lacks State approval, is unlikely to be settled any time soon.

I believe the debate over a permanent repository does not need to be settled in order to recognize the need for interim storage. Even if Congress and a future president reverse course and move forward with Yucca Mountain, interim storage facilities would still be an essential component of a badly needed national nuclear waste strategy.

By creating interim storage sites, a top recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Commission, we would begin reducing the federal liability while providing

breathing room to site and build a permanent repository.

Interim storage facilities are of particular importance for the sites of decommissioned power plants that are maintained solely to store the spent nuclear fuel. In the last fourteen months alone, four nuclear power plants have been taken out of service: the Crystal River plant in Florida, the Kewaunee plant in Wisconsin, the San Onofre plant in California, and the Vermont Yankee plant in Vermont.

Until there is an interim storage facility for this waste, these sites will join the likes of Rancho Seco and Humboldt Bay, which stopped operating in the 1980s but continue to store spent nuclear fuel. All told, there are more than 6,500 metric tons of nuclear waste stored at sites that no longer have operating reactors.

Interim storage facilities could also provide alternative storage locations in emergency situations, if spent nuclear fuel ever needs to be moved quickly from a reactor site.

Both short- and long-term storage programs are vital.

Because of the long timeline for permanent facilities, interim storage facilities allow us to achieve significant cost savings for taxpayers and utility ratepayers and finally start the process of securing waste from decommissioned plants by finally removing waste from the sites of decommissioned power plants.

One thing is certain: inaction is the most costly and least safe option.

Our longstanding stalemate is costly to taxpayers, utility ratepayers and communities that are involuntarily saddled with waste after local nuclear power plants have shut down.

It leaves nuclear waste all over the country, stored in all different ways.

It is long overdue for the government to honor its obligation to safely dispose of the nation's nuclear waste—and this bipartisan bill is the way to do that.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 108—COMMEMORATING THE DISCOVERY OF THE POLIO VACCINE AND SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO ERADICATE THE DISEASE

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. COONS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. AYOTTE, and Mr. REED) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 108

Whereas April 12, 2015, is the 60th anniversary of the announcement of the discovery of the first safe and effective polio vaccine;

Whereas the vaccine was developed by Jonas Salk with the support of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, now known as the March of Dimes Foundation;

Whereas the vaccine developed by Jonas Salk was proven safe and effective in a massive nationwide field trial organized by the March of Dimes Foundation, relying on the largest peacetime mobilization of volunteers in the history of the United States;

Whereas polio is a crippling and potentially fatal infectious disease for which there is no cure, which means that vaccination is the only viable pathway for eradication of the disease;

Whereas nearly 60,000 children in the United States were reported to have polio in 1952 alone, with more than 20,000 cases of paralysis;

Whereas, due to vaccination, polio was eliminated from the United States in 1979;

Whereas the use of the inactivated polio vaccine developed by Jonas Salk and the oral polio vaccine developed by Albert Sabin has dramatically reduced the incidence of polio worldwide;

Whereas the fight against polio has been part of the mission of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (referred to in this preamble as the “CDC”) since the 1950s;

Whereas, as part of the fight against polio, the CDC established a national polio surveillance unit and worked with Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin to widely distribute vaccines;

Whereas, through the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (referred to in this preamble as the “Initiative”), the Federal Government, Rotary International, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund (commonly known as “UNICEF”), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the United Nations Foundation have joined together with governments around the world to successfully reduce cases of polio by more than 99 percent since the launch of global polio eradication efforts;

Whereas Rotary International, a global association founded in Illinois, has contributed more than \$1,000,000,000 alone to, and volunteered countless hours in, the global fight against polio;

Whereas October 24 of each year is recognized internationally as World Polio Day to commemorate the fight against the disease;

Whereas, according to the CDC, polio vaccination has prevented over 13,000,000 paralytic polio cases and 650,000 deaths since 1988;

Whereas only 3 countries (Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan) remained polio-endemic in 2014, which is a decrease from more than 125 countries in 1988;

Whereas there is a global push to eradicate polio by 2018;

Whereas investments in polio eradication are helping improve routine immunization systems and creating lasting infrastructure to support other health priorities;

Whereas the Initiative is finding and reaching the most vulnerable children in the world with the polio vaccine and combining those efforts with other health care resources;

Whereas, in December 2011, the CDC activated Emergency Operations Center of the CDC to “support the final push for polio eradication”;

Whereas the eradication of polio would be the only time in history aside from the eradication of smallpox that a disease affecting humans has been eradicated, and the eradication of polio would be a “once-in-a-generation opportunity for global public health”; and

Whereas the success of the polio vaccine has shown the public what sustained medical research can accomplish and should encourage support for future Federal funding for biomedical research and public health prevention and control: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the work of Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin in developing effective, safe vaccines for polio;

(2) supports the goals and ideals of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative;

(3) encourages and supports the international community of governments and nongovernmental organizations in remaining committed to the eradication of polio; and

(4) encourages the Federal Government to continue committing funding to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative and for biomedical and basic scientific research so that more life-saving discoveries can be made.

SENATE RESOLUTION 109—ACKNOWLEDGING AND HONORING BRAVE YOUNG MEN FROM HAWAII WHO ENABLED THE UNITED STATES TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN JURISDICTION IN REMOTE EQUATORIAL ISLANDS AS PROLONGED CONFLICT IN THE PACIFIC LED TO WORLD WAR II

Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Ms. HIRONO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 109

Whereas in the mid-19th century, the Guano Islands Act (48 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.) enabled companies from the United States to mine guano from a number of islands in the Equatorial Pacific;

Whereas after several decades, when the guano was depleted, the companies abandoned mining activities, and the control of the islands by the United States diminished and left the islands vulnerable to exploitation by other nations;

Whereas the Far East during the late 19th century and early 20th century was characterized by colonial conflicts and Japanese expansionism;

Whereas the 1930s marked the apex of the sphere of influence of Imperial Japan in the Far East;

Whereas military and commercial interest in Central Pacific air routes between Australia and California led to a desire by the United States to claim the islands of Howland, Baker, and Jarvis, although the ownership of the islands was unclear;

Whereas in 1935, a secret Department of Commerce colonization plan was instituted, aimed at placing citizens of the United States as colonists on the remote islands of Howland, Baker, and Jarvis;

Whereas to avoid conflicts with international law, which prevented colonization by active military personnel, the United States sought the participation of furloughed military personnel and Native Hawaiian civilians in the colonization project;

Whereas William T. Miller, Superintendent of Airways at the Department of Commerce, was appointed to lead the colonization project, traveled to Hawaii in February 1935, met with Albert F. Judd, Trustee of Kamehameha Schools and the Bishop Museum, and agreed that recent graduates and students of the Kamehameha School for Boys would make ideal colonists for the project;

Whereas the ideal Hawaiian candidates were candidates who could “fish in the native manner, swim excellently, handle a boat, be disciplined, friendly, and unattached”;

Whereas on March 30, 1935, the United States Coast Guard Cutter *Itasca* departed from Honolulu Harbor in great secrecy with 6 young Hawaiian men aboard, all recent graduates of Kamehameha Schools, and 12 furloughed Army personnel, whose purpose