



U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board

NWTRB
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U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board

Presented to:
Council of State Governments-Midwest

Presented By:
Daniel Ogg, Executive Director

May 21, 2025

Independent Federal Agency



The U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board (Board) was established by Congress as an independent federal agency in the 1987 amendments to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA)



Board Mission

- The Board evaluates the “technical and scientific validity” of U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) activities related to implementing the NWPA
- These DOE activities include:
 - Packaging of spent nuclear fuel (SNF) and high-level radioactive waste (HLW) and transportation of the wastes to a storage or disposal facility
 - Site characterization, design, and development of facilities for disposing of SNF or HLW



Board Members



At full strength, the Board has eleven members:

- Candidates nominated by National Academy of Sciences solely on the basis of eminence and expertise
- Appointed by the President
- Serve part time for four-year, staggered terms
- May serve until replaced
- Supported by permanent, full-time staff

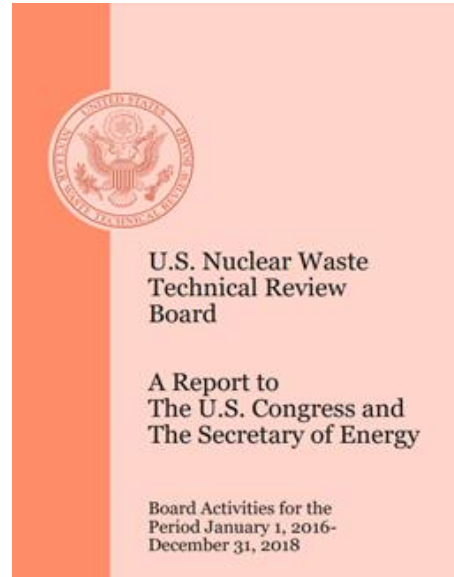


Current Board Members

- **Peter Swift**, Ph.D., Chair – Consultant, Risk Assessment
- Other members were asked to resign effective January 23, 2025, by the incoming Administration; official status of these Board members has not yet been confirmed
- [two vacant positions]



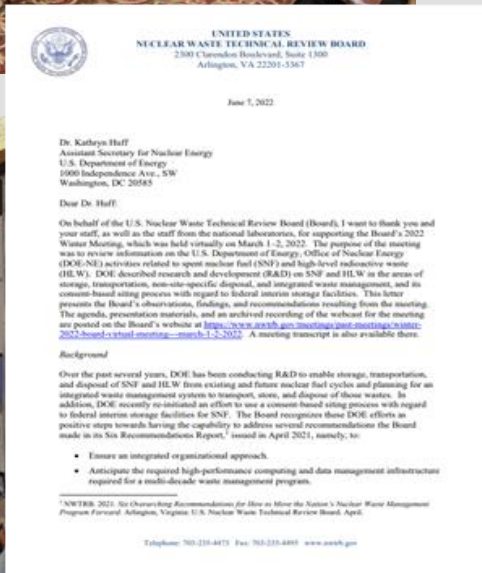
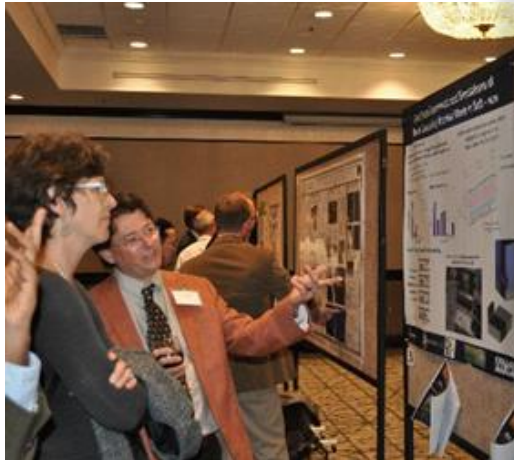
About the Board



- Conducts independent and objective peer review of DOE activities
- Required to report its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the U.S. Congress and the Secretary of Energy
- By law, has access to draft DOE documents – allows Board recommendations to be made during decision-making, not after the fact
- Provides congressional testimony at the invitation of Congress



About the Board (cont.)



- Holds public meetings several times per year in different geographic locations in the United States
- The meetings are webcast
- Provides technical and scientific comments in letters or reports to DOE following public meetings
- Makes all official documents (meeting transcripts and materials, reports, correspondence, congressional testimony, etc.) available on its website: www.nwtrb.gov

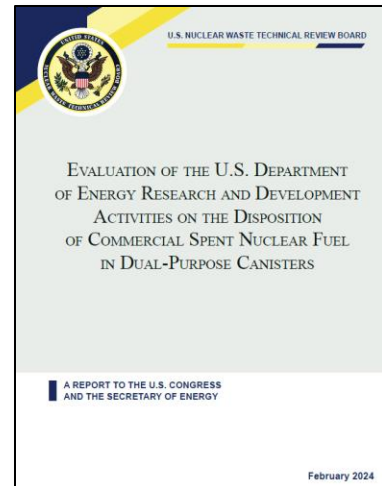
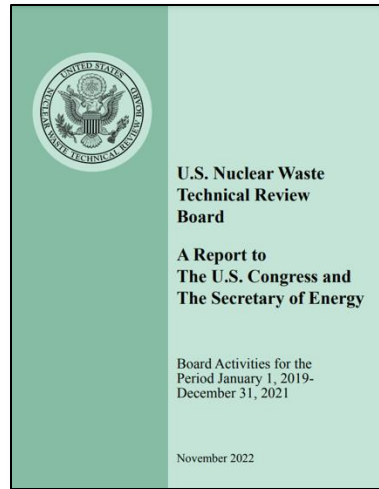
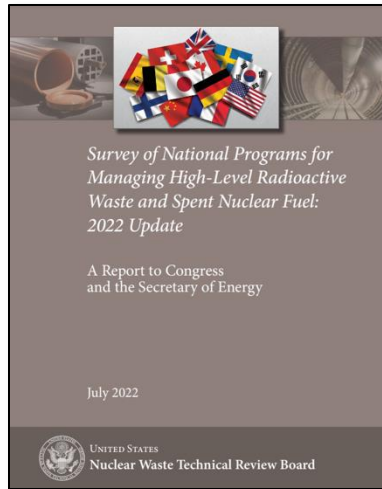


Recent Board Meetings

- Spring 2024 Meeting – May 21-22, 2024
 - Location: Knoxville, Tennessee / Hybrid
 - Topic: DOE non-site-specific R&D on waste disposal in crystalline rock types and R&D on fuel degradation after disposal
- Summer 2024 Meeting – August 29, 2024
 - Location: North Augusta, South Carolina / Hybrid
 - Topic: DOE management and plans for disposal of DOE spent nuclear fuel (SNF)



Recent Board Reports



- *Survey of National Programs for Managing High-Level Radioactive Waste and Spent Nuclear Fuel: 2022 Update – July 2022*
- *Report to the U.S. Congress and the Secretary of Energy: Board Activities for the Period January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2021 – November 2022*
- **Evaluation Of The U.S. Department Of Energy Research And Development Activities On The Disposition Of Commercial Spent Nuclear Fuel In Dual-Purpose Canisters – February 2024**
- **Proceedings of the Board 2023 International Workshop of Siting of Radioactive Waste Facilities – September 2024**



Board Letter of March 18, 2025

- Addressed to the U.S. Congress and the Secretary of Energy
- Includes a finding, two conclusions, and a recommendation regarding the nuclear waste management program in the U.S., and the need for a deep geologic repository for SNF and HLW
- The timing of the letter was motivated by the change of Administration, a new Congress, and a new Secretary of Energy



Board Letter (cont.)

- **Finding:** *The nation needs one or more deep geologic repositories for permanent disposal of domestic spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.*
- **Conclusion 1:** *The Department of Energy does not have an effective program, as of December 2024, that could lead to a deep geologic repository.*
- **Conclusion 2:** *The lack of an effective repository program brings a high risk that ongoing efforts to site one or more federal interim storage facilities will ultimately be unsuccessful.*
- **Recommendation:** *The Board recommends that the Department of Energy take the steps necessary, working with Congress as needed, to create a workable pathway to site, license, construct, and operate a geologic repository for the permanent disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.*

