



Hundreds Testify for Solar

Wendy Wilson, Executive Director

Alliance members had to crowd into two public hearings to support rooftop solar and distributed energy in Idaho. The Idaho Public Utilities Commission held the hearings in March on a proposal to change rate structures for people with rooftop solar energy, wind turbines or micro-hydro.

The Alliance intervened against the proposal. Hundreds of people attended the hearings and over 500 people submitted written testimony. Almost all of the public testimony was against the proposal and in support of the current net metering program.

Many people expressed that they were glad for the Alliance's Solarize the Valley program and urged Idaho Power to make solar energy even more affordable.

Public commenters also asked the Commission to do more, strengthen their oversight **Continues on pg. 3**



Don't Waste Idaho

Beatrice Brailsford, Nuclear Program Director

The Department of Energy wants to bring 7,000 cubic meters of untested plutonium-contaminated waste to Idaho from the shutdown nuclear bomb plant in Hanford, WA. The waste would come in by truck or railroad, crossing the Columbia and Snake rivers and passing through southern Idaho headed to the Idaho National Laboratory. It would be then be treated at the INL and – in theory – trucked to New Mexico for permanent disposal.

But if history repeats itself, much of this waste could be stranded in Idaho, perhaps forever. The INL became a nuclear dump for the federal government starting in the 1950s. Too often waste has come in on an “interim” basis and not left.

This legacy of broken promises runs deep. The Snake River Alliance is now kicking off a wider public effort called **Don't Waste Idaho** to draw attention to this problem. Yielding to federal plans to bring more waste to Idaho is just too dangerous.

Idaho's Agreement Threatened

The 1995 Nuclear Waste Settlement Agreement was supposed to protect Idaho against becoming a de-facto dump. The people of Idaho supported this agreement then.

One of the most important provisions of the Settlement Agreement is a one-year time limit on nuclear waste coming into Idaho for treatment. That has worked for many years, and small quantities of waste have come in, been treated, and left.

Now the federal government wants to erase the one-year time limit from the agreement for the Hanford waste. There is too much to be treated, stabilized, and shipped out in a year. Even if nothing goes wrong, some waste would be stranded in Idaho – and something certainly could go wrong!

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Like me, you probably saw the live-streaming view from Elon Musk's red sports car as it was zooming through space. The image sticks in my mind because it sums up a central irony in our day and age.

We like our creature comforts but don't know where we are going with them. We know we are pushing the limits of our planet to provide for our consumption, but we humans really like our stuff.

I'm not sure I can give it all up – so how can I power my cell phones, my home, and my vehicle with clean energy? Exactly where should we put our own money and resources?

Actually, the way forward is pretty simple. It is time to “solarize” our electric grid and electrify our cars.

According to a study done by NRDC and the Electric Power Research Institute, these two steps taken together will improve our health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 70% by 2050.

That is why the Alliance is kicking off our third year of the successful Solarize the Valley program to help homeowners install rooftop solar in Idaho and increase the amount of renewable energy on our grid.

Personally, I haven't yet invested in a big solar array on my roof. But as a green consumer, I've taken my first step by buying a Chevy Volt. It is an economical car – a hybrid that will be pretty darn close to 100% electric the way I expect to use it.

I'm so excited to continue our work with solar business partners like AltEnergy. And in the next year the Alliance will also promote wider adoption of electric cars in Idaho's challenging climate and terrain.

We don't want or need dangerous and expensive nuclear energy like the project proposed for Idaho (see p 6). Instead, let's reflect on why sending Tesla into space excited so many of us – and how solar “star power” might shape our future.

Wendy Wilson, Executive Director

Hundreds Testify for Solar, Cont ...

role and encourage solar energy. Benjamin Nelson of Boise submitted comments to the Commission that said in part, “It is time for you to listen to and serve your communities and not the utilities and other special interests”.

“Idaho Power should encourage, not discourage, solar and distributed energy.”
- Paula Jull, Pocatello.

Ten organizations including the Alliance intervened in the case before the commission. Attorney John Hammond of Boise represented the Alliance and the Northwest Energy Coalition in this proceeding. We provided an expert witness in the case, Ms. Amanda Levin, an energy policy analyst with the NRDC.

Ms. Levin testified that Idaho Power hasn’t conducted studies to support its proposal. Levin testified that Idaho Power is taking a different path than most utilities in other states. “No utility has filed for a separate rate class without either completing a valuation of solar or cost of service study beforehand or as part of the application,” according to Levin.

As we go to press, the Idaho Public Utilities Commission has not ruled on the future of net metering. If the commission goes with the overwhelming testimony in support of clean energy, it will send the company back to the drawing board to study the costs and benefits of solar. If the Commission rules for Idaho Power, a new class for net metering customers will be set up in the near future, but rates and charges will not change right away. If the Commission does agree to set up a new rate class, it still would be months or years before it approves changes to the actual rates.

Sign Up Now!

The Alliance is sponsoring the successful Solarize the Valley program once again! Go to our website solarizethevalley.org to sign up for a free site assessment and review our low pre-negotiated, all-inclusive prices.

If you live in Ada County, Canyon County or nearby areas including Wood River and Magic Valley, you can take advantage of our low prices for a great rooftop solar system.

Solarize the Valley is a great deal. Over the last two years the Alliance has helped 110 families invest over \$2 million in solar energy. Many of our happy customers are glad to show off their systems. And prices have not increased yet!

So act today! Our preferred installers will arrange to visit your site and take care of everything to get your solar system up and running.

Solarize the Valley makes it easy to be green.

Call us at (208) 344-9161 for more information.





DON'T WASTE IDAHO

Waste Removal Slowed by Accidents

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant is the only deep geologic nuclear waste repository in the US. Thousands of shipments have gone there starting in 1998. But two accidents in 2014 shut it down. It reopened last year on a reduced basis because of contamination that cannot be removed. Workers must now wear full protective gear in the underground facility, which limits their mobility. Overused equipment is also slowing things down.

The Department of Energy admits that WIPP can't take Hanford waste quickly enough to meet Idaho's Settlement Agreement, but argues it would be too costly to ship it back. Idaho would be left holding the barrels.

Idaho's Own Cleanup

The INL has one of the best nuclear cleanup programs in the country. Even so, the timeline keeps slipping and the project completion date is 2060. The INL needs to focus on cleaning up Idaho.

The INL's Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project has treated nearly 65,000 cubic meters of INL's stored

waste and prepared it for shipment to permanent disposal sites out of Idaho. This will be finished in about a year. But, because of problems at WIPP, thousands of barrels of treated waste are just sitting there waiting to be shipped out.

Cleaning up the contamination already at INL must remain Idaho's Number One Priority. The already scheduled cleanup efforts will help protect the Snake River Aquifer, the sole source of drinking water for 300,000 people. But that's only going to happen if Idaho's cleanup isn't interrupted by out-of-state waste, including the proposed Hanford shipments.

Transportation Across Eastern Oregon and Southern Idaho

In 2010 and 2011, Hanford shipped some plutonium-contaminated waste to Idaho. The State of Oregon allowed the shipments because the waste had been tested and none of it contained prohibited materials. It was treated, stabilized, and sent on to WIPP within the framework of the Settlement Agreement.

These next shipments will be different. The thousands of cubic meters of waste left at Hanford haven't been tested and will be more dangerous and difficult to ship. The State of Oregon has already said shipping protocols would have to be changed. DOE wants to ship this untested, untreated nuclear waste across the Columbia River and the Blue Mountains, through some of Idaho's most populated and fertile regions. It would follow the Snake River and be in temporary storage before and after treatment.





PROTECT IDAHO'S WATER. STOP NUCLEAR WASTE.

Your Action Is Needed Now!

Please carry the message to your friends and neighbors: Don't Waste Idaho!

Go online to dontwasteidaho.org and sign a petition to Idaho's attorney general, Lawrence Wasden, and demand that our elected officials stand up to the federal government. "Like us" on Facebook and help us get more signatures!

Tell Idaho's Governor and Attorney General to stand up to pressure from deep-pocketed energy interests and keep Idahoans—and the land and water we depend on—safe from nuclear waste!

Here's why:

1. Idaho must not become the federal government's dump for stranded nuclear waste.

When it comes to Idahoans' health, access to clean and safe drinking water and recreational and agricultural lands, Idaho's elected leaders must keep people fully informed about the risks of nuclear waste.

In 1995, Idaho's Republican governor negotiated a Nuclear Waste Settlement Agreement that ended our status as a default nuclear waste dump. This agreement requires that the government clean up nuclear pollution. It must store waste that is already here more safely and move much of it

out of Idaho for permanent disposal. Nuclear waste brought in for treatment must be removed within one year.

Now the government wants to go back on its word and bring in even more untreated nuclear waste from Hanford in Eastern Washington.

2. Nuclear waste threatens clean drinking water for one-fifth of Idaho's population.

Since the 1950s, our state has been a dump for some of the most dangerous waste in the country. Contaminated materials were buried above Idaho's groundwater and even pumped into the Snake River Aquifer.

The Snake River Aquifer spans more than 10,000 square miles and is the sole source of drinking water for more than 300,000 Idahoans. It holds twice as much water as Lake Erie.

According to the State of Idaho, "Water beneath the INL probably takes about 150 to 250 years to travel to Thousand Springs."

3. We must stop more nuclear waste from coming into Idaho, traveling through Idaho's most populous communities on our public highways and train tracks, and then never leaving.

Idaho is the fastest growing state in the country. New residents don't know about the state's nuclear past, let alone sign up to ship this dangerous waste through their backyards on public highways.

Idaho's Planned Reactors Short of Customers

Government Fills the Gap – With Your Money

A group called the Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS) wants to build 12 nuclear power reactors at the Idaho National Laboratory. The reactors would have a total capacity of 600 MW, and most of their electricity would go out of state.

UAMPS functions as an electricity wholesaler for member utilities. UAMPS was bedazzled by developers' claims about small modular nuclear reactors back in 2012. It eventually convinced more than 30 of its members to pursue the Idaho reactor project.

Since January it's been on the road seeking firmer financial commitments, and UAMPS members are seeing some pretty grim economics. Even in Los Alamos County, NM, surely one of the most pro-nuclear places in the country, the Council vote to go forward squeaked through 4 to 3.

UAMPS claimed it would not proceed with reactor construction unless its members subscribed to all 600 MW. But UAMPS is less than 1/3 of the way there.

Wonder why? The reactors' full output was always far more than the members needed. In addition, since 2014, the project has slowed – and gotten \$1 billion more expensive.

That's right. A 600-MW nuclear power project will now cost \$4.2 billion...and counting.

Low subscriptions are a real problem for UAMPS. Subscriptions are part of what UAMPS will use as collateral for short-term development loans. A subscribing utility signs a "take-or-pay" contract with just a couple of early off-

ramps. After that, it's penalized if it doesn't pay "regardless of whether the Project is completed, operable, operating, damaged, destroyed or terminated."

Enter the government – waving your money. UAMPS will be using public money as collateral for short-term loans covering long-term debt.

NuScale, the reactor designer, has already gotten hundreds of millions of dollars from US taxpayers. UAMPS is counting on a 50% cost share with the federal government to develop and build the reactors. The federal government just released a supposedly competitive \$30 million Funding Opportunity Announcement that the government acknowledges can only go to the Idaho project. This spring, Congress made sure that UAMPS will be eligible for federal nuclear production tax credits – if the reactors ever go online. The Idaho National Laboratory plans to use the first 2 reactor modules for "research," but it's not clear if INL will own or lease the reactors. The Idaho State Legislature just gave UAMPS breaks on both its property and sales taxes.

The path UAMPS and NuScale are following is familiar. The Union of Concerned Scientists studied all government subsidies for nuclear power since its inception. They concluded that in many instances, it would have been cheaper for the government to just buy the electricity and give it away for free.

You can read more about the proposed reactors' environmental effects in Idaho at www.snakeriveralliance.org/say-no-to-more-waste-less-water.

Member's Corner



The Snake River Alliance is proud to have the support of thousands of members and business supporters like you. The Alliance offers special thanks to the *Radically Awesome Donors* making automatic monthly gifts to the Alliance. Won't you become a RAD donor?

Become a RAD by making your pledge today and get a free "Nuclear waste is not your friend" cap. You rock our world!

Attention beer lovers! Grab a beer and a chance to win a bike this summer! Go to the Sandbar restaurant, Garden City, (it opened in April) anytime and support the Snake River Alliance! For each **Kona Brewing Golden Ale** you buy, your name will be entered into a drawing for a **Big Wave Cruiser Bicycle** at the end of the season. Thank you to the **Riverside Hotel, Garden City,** and the **Craft Brew Alliance!**

Vote for Board of Directors

Please go online to www.snakeriveralliance.org to vote electronically or return the ballot below.

The nominations committee has recommended six nominees for six seats. Please vote for all or for as many as you wish. These new board members will join the board with continuing members Tim Andraea, Phil Gordon, Julie Hoefnagels, Terry Kaufmann, Mike McClay, David Monsees, and Vicki Watson.

- Eilen Jewell, Boise
- Rinda Just, Boise
- Brent Marchbanks, Boise
- Leslee Reed, Buhl
- Chris Talkington, Twin Falls
- Chad Worth, Boise
- Other _____

Ballots must be received by May 11, 2018.

Mail to: Snake River Alliance, P.O. Box 1731, Boise, Idaho, 83701.

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About Our 2018 Board Nominees

Eilen Jewell | Boise

Eilen was born in Boise and attended Snake River Alliance dinners growing up. She is now a professional musician, traveler, and mother. Eilen is looking to give back to the community she loves so dearly by joining the Alliance as a new board member. Eilen has more “Facebook likes” than anyone we know.

Rinda Just | Boise

Rinda was an Idaho deputy attorney general for the Department of Parks and Recreation. She is a native Idahoan and graduated from Boise State University and the University of Washington Law School. She is retired and recently “Solarized” her home in Boise, where she crafts amazing needlepoint.

Brent Marchbanks | Boise

Brent was an early member of the Alliance and is an incumbent board member. He has retired from his career as a public interest lawyer and advocate. He is the former director of Disability Rights of Idaho. He has been a volunteer leader with deep concerns about nuclear power and nuclear weapons.

Leslee Reed | Buhl

Leslee is co-owner of Onsen Farm in Buhl, Idaho, with her husband, James Reed. She is an artist, nature lover, a realtor, and expert on sustainable food. But her day job keeps her focused on

the Onsen Farm’s CSA, newsletter and workshops.

Chris Talkington | Twin Falls

Chris is a city council member and former mayor of Twin Falls. He served in the U.S. Strategic Air Command and is now retired from a career in juvenile adjudication, banking, and electronic media.

Chad Worth | Boise

Chad is an industrial engineer and energy program director for Energy Solutions, a clean energy consulting firm. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, California. Chad, an incumbent board member, brings his expertise in solar PV technology and related technical subjects to the Alliance and our Solarize the Valley program.

We Will Miss You!

The Alliance is always grateful for the service and support of our volunteers. We are especially appreciative of this year’s graduating class of very active retiring board members: Stephen Crowley and Liz Paul in Boise, Jasmine Furnish in Ketchum, and Linda Leeuwrik in Pocatello. Thank you for your outstanding community leadership and commitment to the Snake River Alliance!



SNAKE RIVER ALLIANCE

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Alliance Spring Fest Dinner and Annual Meeting!

You are Invited to a fun-filled evening
Saturday, May 12 at, The Bridge Event Center,
6200 N Garrett St, Garden City, ID

6:00 p.m.— Dinner

Food by Bombay Grill - bombayboise.com

Delicious, traditional Indian food

Beer by Payette Brewing

Wine by Boise Co-op

Costs: Members \$25 / Non-members \$30

Youth 5 to 17 years old / \$10

Kids under 5 / free



Music by Belinda Bowler

Please come and meet your Alliance board
members, staff and volunteers.

Tickets can be purchased at
snakeriveralliance.org or by calling

(208) 344-9161.

or contact Leigh at
lford@snakeriveralliance.org.