



## Department of Energy To Permanently Deactivate Fast Flux Test Facility Research Reactor

WASHINGTON, DC - After an exhaustive, eight-month review of possible missions and future commercial uses for the Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF) research reactor ordered by Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham and conducted by Under Secretary Robert Card, the U.S. Department of Energy announced today that restart of the FFTF is impracticable and that the department will proceed with the deactivation of the facility.

The department's decision comes after Secretary Abraham ordered, on April 25, a thorough and comprehensive review of the FFTF, which included an initial 90-day review of all information that might be relevant to a decision on the future of the FFTF, as well as a review of expressions of interests by public and private groups to commercially operate the facility.

"I want to thank the FFTF review teams who committed countless hours to this process," Secretary Abraham said. "And in particular, I want to thank Congressman Doc Hastings, who worked longer and harder than anyone else to identify options for the potential restart of the FFTF. This review was conducted in an objective, exhaustive and thorough manner. The department's final determination is based on sound science, an extensive analysis of the costs and benefits of disposition options and an in-depth consideration of the feasibility of commercial use options."

During the review process, the department asked for submissions of proposals outlining potential commercial uses for the FFTF. Only one commercial proposal, submitted by the Advance Nuclear and Medical Systems (ANMS) proposing to use the FFTF for medical and research isotope production, provided new information that the department deemed worthy of further review. Subsequently, Secretary Abraham ordered an analysis of that proposal.

A working group of department personnel, directed by Under Secretary Robert Card, ultimately concluded that the ANMS proposal introduced significant drawbacks and presented potentially new legal and financial liabilities to the Department of Energy. Separate consideration was given to a related DOE-funded research mission proposed by Argonne National Laboratory to use the facility as a demonstration project related to nuclear fuel issues. Both proposals, collectively, were deemed to introduce significant liability and funding requirements for the DOE that could exceed \$2 billion dollars.

Specifically, the review team determined that the ANMS proposal presented significant operational and legal obstacles likely to result in project delays and increased costs to taxpayers; including:

- worker-related financing of operations;
- the lack of any identified commercial purchasers of medical or research isotopes;
- DOE's assumption of costs associated by fuel disposal, as well as, DOE's assumption of costs associated with ultimate decontamination and decommission of the site if the commercial operations of the FFTF by ANMS proved unsuccessful; and
- operational and safety oversight and approval of the FFTF by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission are questionable, given that the reactor was not originally built to NRC specifications.

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