

RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO EXPANDING NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE IN IDAHO

WHEREAS, the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) is a source of good-paying jobs and its researchers and workers have helped make Idaho a national center for nuclear energy research, development, and national security; and

WHEREAS, Idaho can continue to lead the nation in nuclear research and innovation without becoming the nation's long-term nuclear waste storage site; and

WHEREAS, the 1995 Idaho Settlement Agreement established a bipartisan framework that has allowed INL's important mission to grow while placing enforceable limits on nuclear waste entering Idaho and requiring nuclear waste to be treated and removed from the state; and

WHEREAS, the Settlement Agreement represents a straightforward bargain where Idaho supports world-class nuclear research and the federal government remains responsible for ultimately removing nuclear waste from Idaho; and

WHEREAS, three decades after that agreement was reached, significant quantities of legacy nuclear waste remain in Idaho; and

WHEREAS, the federal government still has not opened a permanent repository for spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste, meaning additional material brought to Idaho for storage currently has no permanent repository to which it can ultimately be sent; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Energy has proposed Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campuses (NLICs) that include the storage of nuclear waste and Governor Little's administration has sought consideration for Idaho to be a host; and

WHEREAS, proposals surrounding the NLIC initiative contemplate Idaho assuming responsibility for substantial quantities of used nuclear fuel and radioactive waste, with the possibility that Idaho could take on one-third of the nation's nuclear waste inventory; and

WHEREAS, accepting substantially more nuclear waste before the federal government fulfills its existing cleanup and removal commitments would fundamentally alter the bargain Idaho made with the federal government and expose future generations of Idahoans to obligations they did not agree to; and

WHEREAS, INL sits above the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer, a critical source of drinking and agricultural water for Idaho communities, making decisions about the long-term storage of nuclear waste consequential far beyond the boundaries of the Laboratory; and

WHEREAS, there must be careful consideration of the long-term responsibilities and risks Idaho would assume by accepting substantially more of the nation's nuclear waste; and

WHEREAS, Idaho should not have to choose between good jobs and clean water, between scientific innovation and keeping commitments, or between supporting INL and protecting future generations from indefinite responsibility for nuclear waste generated elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, Idaho has already demonstrated that it can support nuclear innovation while demanding accountability from the federal government, and there is no reason to abandon that principle now;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Idaho State Democratic Party recognizes and supports the Idaho National Laboratory, its workers, and its important contributions to Idaho's economy, scientific research, and national security; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Idaho State Democratic Party supports continued investment in INL, advanced nuclear research, and the creation of good-paying Idaho jobs, while rejecting the premise that expanding Idaho's responsibility for the nation's nuclear waste must be the price of that economic development; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Idaho State Democratic Party supports preserving and vigorously enforcing the core protections of the 1995 Idaho Settlement Agreement and opposes any agreement that substantially expands the amount of out-of-state nuclear waste stored in Idaho without a credible and enforceable path for that waste to leave Idaho; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Idaho should not assume responsibility for storing a substantial additional share of the nation's nuclear waste while significant legacy waste remains in Idaho and the federal government has not established a permanent repository for nuclear waste; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that before Idaho assumes any new nuclear-waste obligations, Idahoans deserve meaningful public and Tribal participation and full disclosure of what material would enter the state, how much would be accepted, how long it could remain, where it would ultimately go, who would bear the financial responsibility for its management and removal, and what protections would exist for the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Idaho State Democratic Party supports an Idaho National Laboratory that continues creating good jobs, advancing scientific discovery, and strengthening national security, but opposes making Idaho the long-term storage site for substantially more of the nation's nuclear waste.