

progress those projects as agreed. Rather than being hamstrung, unilaterally, by doing things a certain way simply because that's how it's always been done, our EM site managers are rolling up their sleeves and looking beyond the present to reach the possible. They are doing it with a completion mindset focused on understanding how to best apply our resources to risks, clarify our regulations, and defining the best options to safely treat, dispose, and contain waste today in order to protect the next generation.

To that end, I've asked our site managers to identify potential options within three scenarios and within a 10-year window:

- The baseline case: uses current baseline and assumes no change in strategy from current operations.
- The optimized baseline case: incorporates realistic constraints, best effort towards site closure, well-defined interim end states.
- The unconstrained case: what it would take to get the site to closure in 10 years? This is possible at many of our sites. This case is designed to identify barriers and pinch points whether they be funding, regulatory, human capital, or policy.

The analyses will be used as a basis for discussion with you and other stakeholders. During the site breakout sessions this afternoon, I have asked each field manager, as well as EM-3, to discuss this process and their plans to create a productive environment of partnership to achieve meaningful progress. I hope you will talk openly with them about your views on the remaining risks on-site. We want to hear from you on how you would like to communicate and participate as we fight the EM liability current together. Know that this is a starting point in what will be a collaborative approach as the options analysis evolves. This process will include several opportunities for meaningful input and public comment next year.

Now, I'd like to discuss an issue that I have been personally involved with for a long time—the interpretation of high-level waste. I am glad to see the department moving the discussion on

this forward after so many reports and recommendations from outside groups, including ECA [Energy Communities Alliance]. I hope that many of you will provide your unique insight into efforts underway to examine possible options to better manage and dispose of waste that has been stored at sites for decades with no near-term path forward.

Last month the department issued for public comment its

*As project life-cycle schedules drag out, aging facilities, components, and equipment are stretching resources. It's simple math: We can either put money toward cleanup or we can maintain aging facilities and build new, but we can't do it all.*

interpretation of the statutory term "high-level radioactive waste"—an interpretation that would bring the U.S. more in line with definitions used by the rest of the world—having the option to classify waste based on its actual contents and associated risks versus solely on the source of the waste. Yesterday, I heard a lot of



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