



JIM DESMOND
SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: August 26, 2025

01

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

CONTINUED ADVOCACY FOR THE REMOVAL AND RELOCATION OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL FROM THE SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION (SONGS) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

The San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) operated in the northwest corner of San Diego County for more than 47 years. The station ceased all nuclear operations in June 2013 after excessive vibrations and other issues degraded tubes in the steam generators. Stored on the site today is 1,400 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel, a direct byproduct of 45 years of nuclear power operations. SONGS is currently in year five of an eight-year dismantling process of facilities and equipment at the site.

At this time, the federal government has not provided a permanent repository for spent nuclear fuel that could accept SONGS' spent fuel. Because of this, Southern California Edison (SCE) must continue to store the nuclear waste onsite, in dry cask storage, indefinitely. The spent fuel must be relocated offsite for the SONGS site to be fully restored and for the land to be returned to the U.S. Navy to support the national security mission of training Marines.

It's important to note that an emerging "nuclear renaissance" is bringing helpful attention to spent fuel. Artificial intelligence and data centers require an exponential growth in electricity generation and next-generation small modular reactors (SMRs) can help address this growing demand for power. The prospect of reprocessing spent nuclear fuel in the U.S. for use in advanced reactors is at the research and development phase. A May 23, 2025, presidential executive order (EO) stated, "Swift and decisive action is required to jumpstart America's nuclear energy industrial base." The EO calls on the Secretary of Energy to submit a plan by January 2026 for "transferring spent nuclear fuel from reactors to a government-owned, privately operated reprocessing...facility" and "the efficient disposal of the wastes generated by recycling or reprocessing through a permanent disposal pathway." Now is a vital time to continue advocating for solutions through Spent Fuel Solutions.

The Spent Fuel Solutions coalition is led by an executive board that includes the plant owners and representatives of surrounding local governments. More specifically, this decision-making body is composed of Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas & Electric, City of Riverside, the County

SUBJECT: CONTINUED ADVOCACY FOR THE REMOVAL AND RELOCATION OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL FROM THE SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION (SONGS) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

of Orange, and the County of San Diego (County). Moving San Onofre's spent nuclear fuel offsite is a shared priority for local communities and SONGS' co-owners. The executive board currently sets goals and directs efforts to advocate for the removal of spent fuel from SONGS to a federally licensed facility.

Today's item provides an update on the current status of SONGS, including continued participation in the Spent Fuel Solutions coalition. In addition, this item will approve a resolution in which the coalition will advocate for the continued removal and relocation of spent nuclear fuel from the San Diego region and would also authorize the Director of the Department of Purchasing and Contracting (DPC) to enter into single source negotiations with Southwest Strategies to procure management services that continue to support the work of the coalition.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)
SUPERVISOR JIM DESMOND**

1. Adopt a resolution entitled: "A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO AUTHORIZING CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE SPENT FUEL SOLUTIONS COALITION", which is a coalition of regional partners who seek to advocate for the removal and relocation of spent nuclear fuel from the San Diego County region.
2. In accordance with Board Policy A-87, Competitive Procurement, approve and authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting to enter into negotiations with Southwest Strategies, LLC; and, subject to successful negotiations and determination of a fair and reasonable price, award a contract for management of the Spent Fuel Solutions coalition with an objective to secure a federally licensed storage or disposal solution for the spent fuel at SONGS for one year beginning October 1, 2025 and ending September 30, 2026 with four option years to extend, and to amend the contract as needed to reflect changes to services and funding.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The County recognizes the potential health and psychological impacts the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) site may have on the community, especially in its current condition. Today's item will continue in our effort to pursue legislation, appropriations, and collaboration-based siting for spent fuel storage/disposal facilities and securing a federally licensed storage or disposal solution for the spent fuel, with the aim of alleviating community impacts.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today's item contributes to the County's Sustainability goals by advocating for the removal of hazardous materials to protect the health and wellbeing of the environment, existing and future residents, visitors and tourists.

FISCAL IMPACT

One-time funds for this request, estimated at \$100,000, are included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Plan in the Office of Emergency Services (OES). The funding source is existing

SUBJECT: CONTINUED ADVOCACY FOR THE REMOVAL AND RELOCATION
OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL FROM THE SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR
GENERATING STATION (SONGS) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

General Purpose Revenue. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) operated in the northwest corner of San Diego County for more than 45 years. Construction on the first of three units that would ultimately be built at the site began in 1964 and, in 1968, Unit 1 began commercial operation. Construction on Units 2 and 3 began in 1972 and commercial operation began in 1983 and 1984, respectively. By April 1987, SONGS ranked second in gross electricity generation in the United States, generating nearly 17.4 million megawatts.

After nearly 25 years of power generation, Unit 1 was shut down in November 1992 and then largely decommissioned in 2005. Units 2 and 3 remained operational until January 2012, when the former was taken offline for routine maintenance and the latter was shut down. In the same month, Southern California Edison (SCE) announced that both units would remain shut down due to excessive wear found in steam generator tubes. By June 2013, SCE announced the permanent retirement of SONGS. Stored on the site today are 123 canisters with 1,400 metric tons of spent fuel, a direct byproduct of nuclear power generation for over 45 years. Even after being taken out of service, the nuclear waste remains radioactive. Its perpetual storage in San Diego County is concerning for many county residents, and local, state, and federal stakeholders. SONGS is currently in year five of an eight-year dismantling process.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 created a timetable and procedure for establishing a permanent, underground repository for high-level radioactive waste by the mid-1990s. In addition, Congress designated the U.S. Department of Energy as responsible for developing a Disposal facility for the long-term management of spent nuclear fuel from SONGS and other U.S. commercial nuclear power plants. At this time, the federal government has failed to provide a permanent repository for spent nuclear fuel from SONGS. The Nuclear Waste Policy Act also established a fee of 1 mill (one-tenth of one cent) per kilowatt-hour to provide for the eventual disposal of spent nuclear fuel from commercial power plants. Through customer cash contributions and accrued interest, the Nuclear Waste Fund has grown to approximately \$52 billion. Spent nuclear fuel can be safely stored on site at SONGS for decades, but SCE cannot complete decommissioning of the plant and restore the land until the federal government takes action to facilitate an off-site solution for storage of the spent nuclear fuel. The County of San Diego (County) is committed to protecting the best interests of its citizens, and to do so, we must object to SONGS being used as a perpetual storage site for nuclear waste.

The Spent Fuel Solutions coalition is led by an executive board that includes the plant owners and local governments. This decision-making body is composed of Southern California Edison, San

SUBJECT: CONTINUED ADVOCACY FOR THE REMOVAL AND RELOCATION OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL FROM THE SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION (SONGS) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Diego Gas & Electric, City of Riverside, the County of Orange and the County of San Diego. Moving San Onofre's spent nuclear fuel off-site is a shared priority for local communities and SONG's co-owners. The executive board will set goals and direct efforts to advocate for the removal of spent fuel from SONGS to a federally licensed facility. In addition to the executive board, the coalition is supported by an advisory council made up of external experts and stakeholders from a range of fields. The advisory council provides ongoing strategic guidance to help inform the coalition's outreach, education, and policy work.

The coalition's actions will include encouraging federal leaders to pursue legislation, appropriations, and collaboration-based siting for spent fuel storage/disposal facilities; mobilizing at key points in the legislative process to advocate for necessary legislation and appropriations; and securing a federally licensed storage or disposal solution for the spent fuel at SONGS and other facilities. Day-to-day activities will be managed by a coalition manager under the direction of the executive board. The coalition manager has been identified as Southwest Strategies, a San Diego based firm.

Southwest Strategies provides experience in navigating the shifting influences and evolving narrative around the U.S. spent nuclear fuel program. Their unique skill in maintaining the Coalition and the critical knowledge they possess on spent nuclear fuel management positions them as the only qualified provider that can influence the safe, secure, and sustainable relocation of spent fuel at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station. They have significantly helped grow, maintain, support and guide the Spent Fuel Solutions Coalition and its mission to influence the federal government to provide off-site storage and/or permanent disposal solutions for the spent nuclear fuel at SONGS. The Coalition would likely fall apart without Southwest Strategies, as they are deeply integral to one another.

Beginning in Fiscal Year 2023-2024, the coalition manager, Southwest Strategies, coordinated the prioritized activities listed below and documented status updates through monthly activity reports.

Prioritized Activities

- Conduct outreach to federal decision-makers
- Mobilize to advocate for legislation and appropriations
- Identify, network, and coordinate efforts with other U.S. facilities and spent fuel advocacy organizations
- Develop coalition materials
- Distribute introductory letters
- Conduct briefings
- Advocate for equity-informed, best-practice-based criteria for confirming community consent
- Expand coalition website
- Launch a social media program
- Distribute member email updates
- Seek resolutions of support

SUBJECT: CONTINUED ADVOCACY FOR THE REMOVAL AND RELOCATION OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL FROM THE SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION (SONGS) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

- Conduct media outreach
- Participate in speaking engagements
- Hold executive board and advisory council meetings
- Coordinate activities with executive board
- Continue coalition development
- Launch eblast series

As of Fiscal Year 2024-2025, the coalition has accomplished the following actions:

Accomplishments

- Expanded coalition membership to more than 280 in nine states, including 84 elected officials, eight environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOS) and advocates, 36 business and labor groups, and 152 residents and other stakeholders.
- Secured a joint resolution from the California State Assembly and Senate and 10 resolutions of support from local cities and school districts, including:
 - Capistrano Unified School District
 - Dana Point
 - Encinitas
 - Huntington Beach
 - La Mesa
 - Laguna Niguel
 - Newport Beach
 - Oceanside
 - Riverside
 - San Clemente
- Launched an eblast series and quarterly webinars featuring subject-matter experts sharing specific industry knowledge, information, and expertise.
- Responded to DOE's RFIs on collaboration-based siting, package performance demonstration and consolidated interim storage; engaged with key leaders on an ongoing basis; and coordinated coalition participation on two occasions when former Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm visited SONGS.
- Expanded coalition website with information about international best practices.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed actions advocating for the continued removal and relocation of spent nuclear fuel in the San Diego region support Sustainability Goals in the County of San Diego's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, by taking steps to cultivate a safe natural environment for residents, visitors and future residents to enjoy.

SUBJECT: CONTINUED ADVOCACY FOR THE REMOVAL AND RELOCATION
OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL FROM THE SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR
GENERATING STATION (SONGS) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Respectfully submitted,

JIM DESMOND

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Desmond', with a stylized, cursive script.

Supervisor, Fifth District

ATTACHMENT(S)

ATTACHMENT A – A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO AUTHORIZING CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE SPENT
FUEL SOLUTIONS COALITION