



PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

Advanced Nuclear Medicine Initiative (ANMI) Takes Hit in House Appropriations

The annual fight for fiscal year (FY) funds has begun for the Department of Energy (DOE). Earlier this year, the Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) and the American College of Nuclear Physicians (ACNP) sent a joint letter supporting the DOE FY 2001 budget. In that letter, we asked that funding be increased from President Clinton's suggested budget of \$17.2 million—\$3.2 million less than last year's funding and \$6.8 million less than 1996. We stated that the budget should be raised to the 1996 budget level.

The first step in the FY 2001 budget process has already taken place, and it appears that the DOE, isotope funding, and ANMI are in for a very long year. SNM and ACNP were major advocates for ANMI's inclusion in the FY 2000 bill language and continue to strongly support the program. This initiative establishes scholarships encouraging training in nuclear medicine, encourages the scientific process through utilization of a peer review system, and begins a focused program in the fight against malignant disease through α -emitting isotopes. The House Energy and Water Subcommittee cut the ANMI by \$2 million, the Fast Flux Test Facility was cut by \$5 million, and the total amount appropriated was \$950 million less than the Clinton-proposed amounts. The amounts for the 2001 FY Budget passed through the House on June 28 are as follows:

- Isotope support and production: \$15,215,000, a reduction of \$2 million from the budget request;
- Total isotope funding in FY 2001 estimated at \$23,215,000, which includes a direct appropriation of \$15,215,000 and the use of \$8 million in offsetting collections to be received from the sale of isotopes and other services in FY 2001;
- \$500,000 for the ANMI, a reduction of \$2 million from the budget request; and
- \$900,000 to process uranium material to obtain α -emitting isotopes to be used in medical research and human clinical trials for the treatment of various cancers.

The Senate Appropriations Committee has not yet held hearings on the FY 2001 Energy Appropriations Bill. SNM and ACNP have sent a joint

letter to the members of the Energy and Water Subcommittee, restating our opinion that the amounts for the 2001 budget are too low and should be reset at the 1996 levels and emphasizing the importance of increasing the ANMI to the full \$5 million envisioned when it was first passed in 1999. To view the letter, visit the SNM Web site or contact Amanda Sullivan at 703-708-9000, ext. 1255.

Continued Support of High-Enriched Uranium (HEU) Export

A year ago, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) agreed to a 5-y export license for Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) and MDS Nordion. SNM/ACNP supported this license, because the license to export HEU was and remains central to the production of essential medical radioisotopes.

Although a meeting is not required as part of the approved export license, the NRC nevertheless held a briefing meeting on this matter on July 10th. No action was taken, and the Commissioners made it clear that they would in no way interfere in the distribution of ^{99}Mo . SNM/ACNP have sent a comment letter to the NRC questioning the reasoning behind this meeting and reaffirming our continued support for the HEU export license. To view the letter, visit the SNM Web site at www.snm.org or contact the SNM Public Affairs Department.

Oklahoma May Become Next Agreement State

The NRC is considering Oklahoma's request to allow the state to have regulatory authority over certain nuclear materials. This would make it the 32nd state to enter such an agreement with the NRC. If the agreement is approved, 220 current NRC licenses, mostly medical and industrial uses, would be transferred to the Oklahoma's jurisdiction. The NRC would continue to oversee 14 nuclear materials licenses and regulation of nuclear reactors and major nuclear facilities in Oklahoma. A preliminary finding by the NRC indicates that Oklahoma's radiation control program is capable of protecting public health and safety. Oklahoma and the NRC hope to reach this agreement by the governor of Oklahoma's requested effective date of September 30.

—William Uffelman

—Amanda Sullivan