

Press Release:
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Portman, Wenstrup, and Johnson Press Administration to Explain Piketon Cleanup Plan

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Rob Portman (R-Ohio), Congressman Brad Wenstrup (R-OH-02), and Congressman Bill Johnson (R-OH-06) demanded that the Department of Energy (DOE) detail its plan for avoiding disruptions in the decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) operations at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant following a unilateral decision by DOE to place new restrictions on a program that has been critical to funding work at the site. This environmental clean-up and restoration work employs nearly 2,000 individuals and is critically important to southern Ohio.

“In recent years, the D&D operations at Piketon have been supplemented by the sale of excess uranium,” the lawmakers wrote. “Your previous secretarial determination covered transfers up to the equivalent of 2,055 metric tons of natural uranium (MTU) per year, in natural uranium hexafluoride provided to contractors for cleanup services at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant. The 2015 determination, however, reduces covered transfers down to 1,600 MTU for the 2016 calendar year, creating a shortfall of 455 MTU. We respectfully request that DOE explain, in detail, how workforce disruptions will be avoided in 2016 given the potential funding shortfalls described above.”

On May 1, 2015, the House of Representatives approved the fiscal year 2016 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill which provided full funding for the cleanup work at Portsmouth. Specifically, the bill provided \$213 million for D&D operations, which surpassed the Obama Administration’s request by \$48 million. DOE’s latest determination could undo the progress being made by Congress in keeping this project on track by reducing a critical funding source for the D&D work by tens of millions of dollars. Such a reduction in funding is not compatible with the Administration’s stated goal of completing the work by 2024.

<http://www.portman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2015/5/portman-wenstrup-and-johnson-press-administration-to-explain-piketon-cleanup-plan>