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Nuclear power will solve energy crisis

By *STEVE CREAMER*

The United States is in an energy crisis. In order to solve this crisis and achieve energy security, we must find ways to diversify our energy supply and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Nuclear power is one of the energy sources that must be utilized, along with solar, wind, biofuels and other renewables, to achieve energy security for the United States.

Nuclear energy is a clean, safe, reliable and non-carbon-emitting source of energy. It must play a growing role in meeting our energy demand. EnergySolutions' mission is to help the United States achieve energy independence, reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment. We can accomplish this by helping clean up the nuclear-waste legacy of the past and by managing current nuclear-waste issues. This will pave the way for nuclear power to play a greater role in meeting our growing energy demands.

We must compete globally

The United States is no longer the world leader in the nuclear industry. It has fallen behind France and Japan. In order for the U.S. to reassert its leadership role, it must participate and compete on the global stage. The United States needs companies like EnergySolutions to safely and responsibly manage the recycling, processing and disposal of nuclear material. I am immensely proud of our workers and our exceptional safety record. We stand ready to provide technical solutions to other countries that are in need. This does not mean that EnergySolutions, or any other U.S. company, should be responsible for disposing of all of the world's nuclear waste.

There may be instances where importing low-level nuclear material, processing it at our state-of-the-art Bear Creek facility in Oak Ridge, and disposing of a very small amount of Class A material at our Clive, Utah, facility, would further a U.S. company's ability to compete more effectively in the global market and help the nuclear renaissance become a reality. None of this material would be disposed of in Tennessee.

There are only two metal-melt facilities in the world that can process this type of material, and one of them is in Tennessee. We have recycled more than 56,000 tons of metals at Bear Creek, including more than 1,000 tons from international sources over the past 12 years. These recycled metals are used to produce shield blocks for reuse at nuclear and accelerator facilities throughout the world. In fact, shield blocks made from recycled metals, including international metals, protect the Spallation Neutron Source in Oak Ridge.

EnergySolutions will maintain Clive's capacity, which currently has more than 33 years remaining, principally for our domestic customers. If, by utilizing no more than 5 percent of Clive's remaining capacity for disposal of international materials, after processing it at our world-class facility in Tennessee, we can assist in the rebirth of nuclear power around the world — I believe that this is sound energy policy.