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Dallas-Based WCS To Seek Approval For High-Level Waste Storage

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Dallas-based Waste Control Specialists, which has operated a low-level radioactive waste storage facility in West Texas since 2012, said it would pursue permits to build a high-level waste storage facility that could be open by 2020.

The company may need Congressional legislation to get paid by the Department of Energy, which is authorized to pay for permanent storage of spent nuclear fuel. Waste Control Specialists (WCS) plans to store used nuclear plant fuel for 60 years or until a permanent repository is ready to accept spent commercial reactor fuel.

WCS said it would apply for a Nuclear Regulatory Commission permit in 2016. Company President Rod Baltzer said at a news conference that it would cost "millions, but not billions," to construct the facility, which would use long-term storage strategies and techniques similar to ones found at operating nuclear power plants.

The overall need for a long-term storage plan grows daily. There are tens of thousands of tons of spent fuel in storage today at nuclear power plants. However, the high-level WCS facility's priority would be storage of waste from nuclear power plants permanently taken offline.

Nuclear Energy Institute senior director for federal programs Beverly Marshall called the news of a potential West Texas interim storage facility "a significant development."

The new facility “could enable the federal government to meet its statutory obligation and begin moving used fuel before a repository is open,” she said.

Last year, the government suspended its Nuclear Waste Fund fee, which was supposed to pay for a permanent storage facility, which has never been built. As such, the fund had been accumulating money fecklessly. The fund has \$30 billion and makes \$1 billion per year in interest, a Globe Newswire release on the proposed facility said.

WCS said it had a stellar environmental track record in Andrews County, Texas, where it has a 14,900-acre property, where it stores radioactive waste from hospitals from 34 states. The county commission has already approved of the company's latest ambitions with a unanimous vote.