

WM2015 Conference Panel Report

PANEL SESSION 001: Waste Management Symposium 2015 Plenary Session

Session Co-Chairs: **Jim Fiore**, *Fiore Consulting*
James Gallagher, *Gallagher Consulting*

Panel Reporter: **John Mathieson**, *NDA*

Panelists:

- **Virginie Schwarz**, *Director for Energy at the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy (France)*;
- **James Taylor**, *General Manager of URS Global Management and Services Group (GMOS)*; and
- **Mark Whitney**, *Acting Assistant Secretary for US DOE – Office of Environmental Management*.

Mr. Gallagher welcomed attendees to the 41st annual Waste Management conference. He introduced Mr. Marty Schneider, CEO of Exchange Monitor Publications and Forums, who delivered a eulogy in tribute to the recently deceased Ed Helminski, whom he described as “the conscience of the industry”.

Mr. Fiore also welcomed attendees noting that there would be some 500 papers delivered in 137 technical session and panels. He expressed the WM Board’s thanks to the Program Advisory Committee (PAC), the International PAC, the sponsors and supporters who make the conference a success. He also mentioned the numbers of scholarships to be awarded.

Summary of Presentations:

Virginie Schwarz Ms. Schwartz described French energy policy, pointing out that the nuclear contribution would be reducing to ~50% from the current 75% with more reliance on renewable energies, although that would be the highest in the world. There were four main points to the French approach: involvement of Parliament, the creation of a separate Waste Management Organization, transparent and open dialogue on waste research and building close links with national and local authorities. She explained how key waste management decisions had been supported by the Law of 1991 requiring 15 years of research on storage, partitioning, transmutation and underground research, and the 2006 Law requiring deep geological disposal by 2025. A site at Bure in north-eastern France had been selected and was being characterized. This site will take French vitrified HLW, and while solutions exist for very low-level and short-lived wastes, there was still a requirement to find a solution for an intermediate depth repository for long-lived graphite and radium bearing waste. However, the Bure deep, reversible geological repository project, known as CIGEO, is progressing well.

James Taylor Mr. Taylor gave an overview of AECOM’s \$19bn global structure which had a presence in 150 countries. He noted that the company’s core values underpinned everything they did and how they had transformed from an M&O type contractor, with little incentive to perform, with returns of ~4-6%, to a performance based approach, with a better incentive structure, providing rewards of 0-14%; this, however, required a greater sharing of risk. He gave examples of where AECOM was teaming with others to achieve results, such as K25 and the Hanford River Corridor projects, and at Sellafield Legacy Ponds and Silos, where \$700m had been saved on the budget. He thought the US needed to “get back on track” with

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respect to geological disposal, given other countries such as France and Finland were progressing. Much more work needs to be done regarding clean-up challenges, for example the HLW tanks at Hanford, the reopening of WIPP and the construction of a geological disposal facility. To accomplish this requires a focus on safety, contracting structure, project management, innovation, QA, an agile supply chain and good interaction with Regulator and other stakeholders. AECOM's overall purpose was "to positively impact lives, transform communities and make the world a better place."

Mark Whitney Mr. Whitney opened by paying tribute to the 1400 Federal employees and 20,000 strong EM workforce. For FY16, he had requested Congress appropriate \$5.8bn for EM's mission, noting also that "it will be a year to remember." Priorities in the request include a continued stress on safety and security, the recovery of WIPP, tank waste treatment at Hanford, Idaho and Savannah River and the establishment of a field office at Los Alamos. Major projects at Oak Ridge will support the clean-up of the East Tennessee Technology Park and the demolition of the K-27 gaseous diffusion plant. Technology development including state of the art modelling tools will also be a key feature to help address challenges across the complex. Completion of construction of Savannah River's Salt Waste Processing Facility would also be a key achievement.