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# MOX Project Reaches 10 Million Safe Working Hours

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AIKEN, S.C. – The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) announced today that the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility (MOX), under construction at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina, reached 10 million safe working hours without a lost workday. This significant milestone represents nearly two years of safe work during heavy construction involving approximately 2,800 workers.

As one of NNSA's core nuclear nonproliferation programs, the MOX facility plays an important role in U.S. national security and energy policy by facilitating the permanent disposition of 34 metric tons of surplus U.S. weapon grade plutonium. The MOX facility will blend this surplus plutonium with depleted uranium oxide to make mixed oxide fuel for use in existing commercial nuclear power plants. Once the MOX fuel assemblies have been irradiated in commercial power reactors, the plutonium can no longer be readily used for nuclear weapons. The U.S. and Russia have an international agreement to use the MOX process for permanent plutonium disposition.

“Successfully completing 10 million safe working hours at the MOX facility demonstrates the exceptional commitment by the workforce and management to safety, efficiency and accuracy,” said NNSA Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation Anne Harrington. “Once the facility is completed it will support the president’s nuclear security agenda with the disposition of surplus weapons grade plutonium.”

The MOX project is scheduled to begin operation in 2016 and is more than 60 percent complete. Since construction began in 2007, more than 19,000 tons of rebar have been installed and over 118,000 cubic yards of concrete have been placed. More than 400,000 feet of process piping and nearly six million feet of electrical cable are currently being installed, while installation of the process tanks is 90 percent complete.

“The first construction project of its kind in the United States, the MOX project is being executed with precision and safety because of the shared commitment between everyone involved to successfully completing the mission while making safety the first priority,” said Clay Ramsey, NNSA federal project director. “To reach this milestone during such a heightened level of construction is a remarkable achievement.”

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Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; works to reduce global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad.



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