



# NEWS

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December 18, 2007

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## **New Academy Report Drives Changes at Dept. of Energy's Office of Environmental Management**

**Washington** – The National Academy of Public Administration today is releasing a new report on a management review of the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management. Established in 1989, the Office of Environmental Management (EM) oversees the cleanup of dangerous materials resulting from more than half a century of nuclear weapons production and government-sponsored nuclear energy research.

Chief among the challenges facing EM is a significant mismatch between the work EM has been asked to perform and the staff resources required to perform it. The Panel found that EM's staffing allocation would have to be increased by at least 200 over currently budgeted levels in order to meet current performance expectations. The Panel also suggested EM further develop innovative recruitment and human capital strategies to attract and retain the staff required to achieve EM's current and future mission objectives.

Throughout the 19-month study – conducted at the request of the House and Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittees – the National Academy Panel and staff worked closely with EM leadership, making numerous proposals and offering guidance for their implementation. EM has accepted and begun to implement nearly all of the Panel's proposals, including:

- Initiatives to clarify the roles and responsibilities of EM's headquarters offices and those of its senior leadership
- Creation of a management analysis office to reinforce EM's management decision-making
- Further reorganization of the office that oversees EM field operations, which is currently in the process of adding needed staff capacity to carry out that office's functions
- Strengthening of EM's acquisition processes
- Steps to enhance the federal project management function

Howard Messner, former National Academy President and Chair of the Panel that reviewed the EM program, noted that the Congressional committees overseeing the budget of EM had raised serious performance issues for the National Academy to consider as it reviewed this little known but vastly important investment in safeguarding the environment.

"I am optimistic that, with the changes the Panel has proposed and which are now underway, EM will continue to improve performance," Mr. Messner said. "EM will need, however, support from the Department to ensure that it has the resources necessary to turn this opportunity into reality."

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