Question 8: Governance of the Nuclear Waste Administration – Membership of the Oversight Board
Submitter’s Name/Affiliation: Kevin Kamps/Beyond Nuclear

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Dr. Meserve testified in 2012 that representatives of stakeholders and public utility commissioners should be added to the Nuclear Waste Oversight Board. Would these additions make the Board better able to carry out its fiduciary oversight mission effectively?

BEYOND NUCLEAR’S RESPONSE:

Dr. Meserve presided, as NRC Chairman, over the most infamous near-miss at an atomic reactor in the U.S. since the 1979 meltdown at Three Mile Island. Namely, the Hole-in-the-Head reactor lid corrosion fiasco at Davis-Besse, near Toledo, OH, in early 2002.

In late 2002, NRC’s OIG concluded that the agency, including at very high levels (such as the chairman’s office) had prioritized nuclear utility profits over public health and safety at Davis-Besse.

Dr. Meserve resigned his chairmanship of NRC a short time later.

So, Dr. Meserve’s recommendations, at least in regards to public health, safety, and environmental protection, should be taken with a big grain of salt. His inclusion on the BRC was objectionable for this very reason.

Thus, his suggestion that public utility commissioners, or their association (NARUC), should be added to the Nuclear Waste Oversight Board, is quite dubious. NARUC, for one thing, has long clamored for the opening of the proposed Yucca Mountain dump, in spite of the site’s clear scientific and technical unsuitability (as documented in NRC Chairwoman Allison Macfarlane’s book Uncertainty Underground), as well as Nevada’s adamant resistance to the idea.

Such stubborn advocacy has contributed to the waste of $11-15 billion of ratepayer and taxpayer money at the now wisely canceled Yucca Mountain hole in the ground.

Thus, NARUC’s addition to the board is very questionable.

But, as I responded to your question #7, any and all additions to the board in terms of an anti-nuclear, environmental, and public interest perspectives would be beneficial and helpful, at least in regards to better addressing the radioactive waste dilemma that faces our nation.