

Duke, feds settle over spent fuel

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Duke Energy has negotiated a \$56 million settlement agreement with the federal government as reimbursement for spent fuel storage costs incurred between 1998 and July 2005 at its Oconee, McGuire and Catawba nuclear power plants. Duke, like other utilities, sued the Energy Department for defaulting on its 1998 legal obligation to begin disposing of commercial spent fuel at the Yucca Mountain repository.

Duke said additional funding would be awarded annually for subsequent storage costs. This and any future payments will come from the Treasury Department taxpayer-funded Judgment Fund. Duke Energy Chief Nuclear Officer Brew Barron called the agreement "an important, positive step" that clarifies costs that will be paid and "ensures our ratepayers and shareholders do not bear the full financial burden of these delays."

This is the fourth out of court settlement awarded as reimbursement for spent fuel storage costs. More than 60 utilities have sued DOE for damages associated with Yucca Mountain Project delays. DOE says it will be at least a decade away from opening the Nevada repository - [Inside Energy](#)