CLEAN SMART Act of 2026

Senators Ben Ray Luján (D-NM) and Tim Scott (R-SC)

Background: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), through the Office of Environmental Management (EM), is tasked with the monumental cleanup of our nation's environmental legacy from the Manhattan Project and the Cold War. Remediating the fifteen remaining sites – including plutonium, uranium, contaminated facilities, and polluted soil and groundwater – is among the is among the federal government's most technically complex challenges. With cleanup costs estimated at $700 billion and timelines stretching toward the end of the century, the government must leverage the best available science to improve effectiveness.

To confront ongoing challenges identified by the National Academies and the GAO – including R&D coordination gaps and slow field-level innovation – the DOE established the **Network of National Laboratories for Environmental Management and Stewardship (NNLEMS)** in 2021 to marshal the unmatched expertise of the National Laboratory system. This partnership enhances strategic coordination through independent technical reviews and specialized R&D roadmaps for complex issues like soil and groundwater contamination, while leveraging initiatives like the recently announced DOE Genesis Mission to integrate AI-driven data tools into remediation workflows. With expanded legislative support, this network is positioned to bridge the gap between research and operations by utilizing advanced technology to achieve significant taxpayer savings and accelerate cleanup timelines across the complex.

Executive Summary: The *Combining Laboratory Expertise to Accelerate Novel Solutions for Minimizing Accumulated Radioactive Toxins (CLEAN SMART) Act* builds on the success of EM's National Laboratory Network to accelerate the development and deployment of breakthrough technologies and innovations for legacy nuclear waste cleanup. The CLEAN SMART Act strategically supports the Genesis Mission by integrating its AI and high-performance computing-driven innovations directly into field-level environmental remediation. This synergy ensures that cutting-edge discovery science is applied to critical cleanup sites to maximize efficiency and safety.

Specifically, the *CLEAN SMART Act* would:
- **Codify and Fund NNLEMS:** Ensuring a permanent, stable framework for the labs to drive cleanup innovation
- **Improve Interagency Coordination:** Synchronizing environmental research across agencies
- **Direct Comprehensive Technology Roadmap:** Require DOE to maintain an R&D plan for nuclear cleanup
- **Mandate Corrective Actions for Cost Management:** incorporating GAO recommendations

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