

Wayne Allard

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SENATOR ALLARD ANNOUNCES GAO HAS STARTED INVESTIGATION HE REQUESTED INTO ROCKY FLATS CLEANUP Independent verification that cleanup will meet stringent environmental standards to be delivered by fall

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) said Wednesday that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has notified him that it has started conducting an assessment of the cleanup project at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology site, a former nuclear production facility. Senator Allard requested that the GAO perform such an assessment in November, 2004.

In a letter to Senator Allard and Senate Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee Chairman Jeff Sessions, GAO Natural Resources and Environment Director Gene Aloise said the study will determine if the cleanup project will be completed by the end of 2006, and at the cost projected by the Department of Energy (DOD). It will also examine if the cleanup will achieve a level of protection of public health and the environment consistent with applicable environmental laws.

Citing the complexity of the project, Director Aloise indicated the study should be completed by fall of this year.

“I am pleased the GAO came back to us with a straightforward plan and has begun its assessment,” Senator Allard said.

“What is needed is independent assurance that the project is on time and on budget, and that the site is going to meet the stringent environmental standards outlined for the contractor when the project was initiated,” the Senator said. “I believe this study will live up to those expectations.”

The GAO has previously conducted assessments of the Rocky Flats closure project in 1999 and 2001 at Senator Allard’s request. Since his election to the U.S. Senate in 1996, Senator Allard has successfully worked to roll back the target date for the cleanup to be completed from 2070 to 2006.

Rocky Flats is owned by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and manufactured components for nuclear weapons for the nation's defense until 1992. The current mission of the plant is closure - environmental cleanup, waste management and decommissioning – by December 2006. The industrial complex of more than 100 buildings is located in the center of about nine square miles of undeveloped land 16 miles northwest of downtown Denver.

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