



Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska (shown), Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming, and Sen. Jim Risch of Idaho were joined on an INL tour by Sen. Mike Crapo of Idaho.

Senior Senate committee members visit Idaho laboratory

By Sara Prentice, *INL Communications & Governmental Affairs*

A distinguished audience recently traveled to Idaho to learn about distinctive research capabilities at Idaho National Laboratory. For the first time in lab history, the three most senior members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee toured INL.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming, and Idaho Sen. Jim Risch were joined on the lab tour by Idaho Sen. Mike Crapo. Risch and Crapo extended the invitation for their colleagues to visit INL.

The senators and their staff kicked off the morning by visiting with community members at the Up N' Atom breakfast hosted by the nonprofit Partnership for Science & Technology. Murkowski, the senior Republican on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, spoke to the audience about the importance national labs play in helping secure the nation's energy future.

The senators then spent the day touring INL and meeting with researchers. Their first stop provided a hands-on look at the Process Demonstration Unit, which is part of the Biomass Feedstock National User Facility. They then toured INL's battery lab and learned about work to help integrate renewable energy sources into the nation's power grid. Murkowski expressed a keen interest in work INL is doing with the University of Alaska.



Left to right, Senators Murkowski (Alaska), Risch, Crapo (both Idaho) and Barrasso (Wyoming) learned about distinctive INL research last month.

Following those tours, the senators left INL's Energy Systems Laboratory and boarded a bus bound for INL's desert Site 35 miles west of Idaho Falls. At the Materials and Fuels Complex, Murkowski and Barrasso got their first glimpses of INL's unparalleled nuclear research capabilities as they toured the Hot Fuel Examination Facility.



"The Materials and Fuels Complex is a unique national asset where we can do a complete development and analysis of nuclear fuels from fabrication to performance to recycling," Todd Allen, INL deputy laboratory director for science and technology, told the senators. "There is nowhere else in the country that has this capability."

The senators then toured INL's Advanced Test Reactor, the only U.S. research reactor capable of providing large-volume, high-flux neutron irradiation in a prototype environment. Throughout the day, INL hosts described work supporting a variety of industry customers, including TerraPower, a company chaired by Bill Gates.

Murkowski was so impressed with what she saw that despite being behind schedule, as she left the Site, she insisted on stopping to have her picture taken in front of the historic experimental nuclear aircraft engine prototypes on display at the Experimental Breeder Reactor-I National Historic Landmark.

"To be surrounded by this level of expertise and great thought in a critically important area, it's just amazing," she said. "When I talk about our security as a nation, our leadership as a nation, it all begins with energy."

INL's Advanced Test Reactor was among the facilities the group visited.

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