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| Mar. 1976 | | | MHW devices successfully orbit on LES 8/9 DOD communication satellites |
| May 1976 | | ERDA assumes responsibility for managing Clinch River Breeder Reactor | |
| July-Aug. 1976 | | | SNAP 19 devices successfully power VIKINGS 1 and 2 in Mars landings |
| Nov. 1976 | Carter elected President | | |
| April 1977 | President announces U S will defer reprocessing of spent reactor fuel indefinitely, delays Clinch River development | President proposes a Cabinet-level Department of Energy (DOE) | |
| Aug. 1977 | | Energy Reorganization Act creates DOE, abolishing ERDA, Federal Energy Administration, and Joint Committee on Atomic Energy | MHW device successfully launched on VOYAGER 2 mission to Jupiter, Saturn, and beyond |
| Sept. 1977 | | | MHW device successfully launched on VOYAGER 1 mission to Jupiter, Saturn, and beyond |
| Oct. 1977 | | DOE activated; James Schlesinger nominated as first Secretary of Energy | |
| Jan 1978 | Soviet spy satellite containing nuclear reactor breaks up over northwest Canada | | |
| Mar. 1978 | Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act authorizes president to pursue international studies on proliferation of nuclear materials | | |
| Jan. 1979 | Revolution forces Shah of Iran to flee | | |
| Mar 1979 | Three Mile Island accident | | |
| July 1979 | | | MHW successfully powers VOYAGER 1 fly-through of Jovian system |
| Aug. 1979 | | Charles Duncan, Jr., named Secretary of Department of Energy | MHW successfully powers VOYAGER 2 fly-through of Jovian system |
| Sept. 1979 | | | SNAP 19 successfully powers PIONEER 10 in Saturn fly-by |
| Nov. 1979 | U.S. embassy hostages seized in Iran | | |
| Nov. 1980 | Ronald Reagan elected President | | MHW successfully powers VOYAGER 1 in rendez vous with Saturnian system |