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GROUTING TO BEGIN TOMORROW ON TWO ADDITIONAL SRS WASTE TANKS

AIKEN, S.C. (August 15, 2013) – Cement trucks hauling specially-formulated grout will once again be traversing the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS) as grouting activities on the next two underground radioactive high-level waste storage tanks begins tomorrow.

Savannah River Remediation (SRR) will commence the grouting process in Tanks 5 and 6, nearly two years ahead of its scheduled target date. In an agreement between DOE, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) requires the operational closure of four high-level waste tanks. Tanks 5 and 6 are the first two tanks to be closed toward achieving this milestone and will be the fifth and sixth tanks closed at SRS. Tanks 17 and 20 were closed in 1997 and Tanks 18 and 19 were closed in 2012. All of the closed tanks are located in F Area.

Every waste tank operationally closed signifies further reduction of the most substantial environmental risk in South Carolina, according to Catherine Templeton, SCDHEC Director.

“What you do at SRS, in ridding the state of some of its most hazardous material, is vital to the safety of our citizens and environment,” Templeton said. “By closing these waste storage tanks, you are helping reduce the single highest environmental risk in the state of South Carolina.”

Dr. David Moody, DOE-Savannah River Manager, called the start of filling Tanks 5 and 6 with grout a result of a strong and enduring partnership between DOE, SRR, SCDHEC and EPA.

“Grouting these two tanks says a great deal about the partnership involved in closing SRS waste tanks,” Moody said. “The work has been long, but we are celebrating the continuation of collaborative efforts that have made this possible. Closing four tanks in the span of a year is quite an accomplishment and demonstrates how we continue to deliver at SRS.”

Interim SRR President Stuart MacVean indicated grouting the tanks eliminates risk for workers, the public and the environment. “DOE and SRR are committed to operationally closing SRS waste tanks by reducing risk in a cost-effective manner and in compliance with regulatory commitments,” MacVean said.

Tanks 5 and 6 are different than Tanks 18 and 19 in that they are smaller, holding approximately 750,000 gallons of waste whereas, Tanks 18 and 19 were larger with a capacity of 1.3 million gallons.

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Grouting to Begin on Tanks 5 and 6

However, waste removal and tank cleaning activities were considerably more extensive for Tanks 5 and 6 because this style of tank contains over four miles of two-inch diameter, carbon-steel cooling coil piping. There is enough piping in both tanks that if laid from one end to the other would stretch eight miles.

Both tanks were constructed in the early 1950s. The tanks were used as waste receipt tanks for the nuclear weapons production activities during the Cold War. The maximum amount of waste stored in Tank 5 was approximately 730,000 gallons and 732,000 gallons in Tank 6.

Tanks 5 and 6 underwent extensive waste removal that included liquid and sludge removal, specialized mechanical and chemical cleaning, and isolating the tanks from all systems, leading to regulatory confirmation that the tanks were essentially cleaned and ready for grouting.

Grouting of the underground tanks, ancillary piping and equipment, and annulus containment vessel will continue for approximately four months before the tanks are confirmed closed.

SRS is owned by DOE. The SRS Liquid Waste contract is managed by SRR, a team of companies led by URS Corp. with partners Bechtel National, CH2M HILL and Babcock & Wilcox. Critical subcontractors for the contract are AREVA, Energy Solutions and URS Professional Solutions. Additional information on the Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management and the Savannah River Site can be found at <http://www.em.doe.gov> or <http://www.srs.gov>.

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