



# September 1997 Meeting Minutes

**SRS Citizens Advisory Board  
September 23, 1997 8:30 a.m.  
Marine Corps Air Station  
Beaufort, S.C.**

## Members Present

Members present included William Adams, Ken Goad, Brendolyn Jenkins, Bill Lawless, Ann Loadholt, Jimmy Mackey, Lane Parker, Karen Patterson, and P.K. Smith. Tom Heenan of the Department of Energy and Ann Ragan and Jim Brownlow (alternate) of South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and Camilla Warren of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency were also present.

Members absent were Arthur Belge, Tom Costikyan, Bill Donaldson, Mary Elfner, Thelonious Jones, Kathryn May, JoAnn Nestor, Deborah Simone, Ed Tant, Beaurine Wilkins and Becky Witter. Currently, there are five Board vacancies with the recent resignation of Suzanne Matthews. The Department of Energy (DOE) Designated Federal Official present was Tom Heenan. J. Walter Joseph of Aiken, S.C. served as the CAB Facilitator.

The meeting was open to the public and posted in the Federal Register in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). Note: Because a quorum was not present, voting on all motions was tabled to November 1997 at a specially-called meeting of the Board.

## Key Decisions Made by the Board

- No recommendations were adopted by the board since a quorum was not established.
- The Board's Annual Report and first newsletter were approved for printing.
- The Board decided to discontinue paid advertising of subcommittee meetings.

## Approval of Minutes

Approval of the July 21-22, 1997, meeting minutes will be sought in November 1997.

## Agency Updates

Tom Heenan announced that SRS will be the first major DOE site to receive ISO 14001 International Standards for Environmental Management certification in late September. He also announced that the Defense Waste Processing Facility has met its milestone of 150 canisters filled this fiscal year and expects to have filled at least 157 by the end of the September. Mr.

Heenan also announced the resignation of Dr. Mario Fiori, SRS Site Manager later in the morning (see attached press release).

Camilla Warren of the Environmental Protection Agency reported that the "plug-in-ROD" approach to be presented to the board was presented to EPA last week and that EPA embraced this concept. She stated this approach appeared to be a fairly significant tool. She also discussed a workshop between EPA, DOE and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control that resulted in a variation of this theme, but found the team building to be most fruitful. She is scheduling a joint presentation to EPA-Headquarters in October to get to the high level decisionmakers with ideas on how to get cleanup work accomplished. She stated that the CAB had been instrumental in bringing the three agencies together and maintaining communications.

### **Public Comments**

The following public comments were made during the September 22 public meeting:

Robert Newman, Fripp Island, SC.

Mr. Newman commented he had recently received a board mailing that utilized a large envelope unnecessarily and that this was indicative of an attitude. He then discussed a recent editorial in the Beaufort Gazette stating he was amazed by the David and Goliath comparison made to Billy Keyserling's recent settlement with DOE. He suggested the Gazette attend CAB meetings to get answers and stated all that he thought was gained by the recent editorial was publicity. Mr. Newman stated Mr. Keyserling could have come to this CAB and received all the information he ever needed without hiring an attorney.

Mr. Newman also asked the CAB to encourage DOE to preserve non reusable resources for future generations. He stated that DOE need to look far into the future and not simply focus on 2006. He challenged the CAB to ask questions and be sure the answers are meaningful and not soft and cozy.

### **Environmental Remediation & Waste Management Subcommittee Report**

Subcommittee Co-Chair Bill Lawless introduced Phil Prater who gave a presentation on the "Plug-In-Approach." This approach selects a remedy to apply to any operable unit exhibiting certain conditions. A "plug-in" Record of Decision will establish what these conditions are and a process for determining whether they exist. A plug-in remedy is intended to be selected prior to fully characterizing waste units, Prater said.

A focused characterization will be performed as necessary to supplement existing data to determine whether the conditions match the predefined conditions established by the plug-in ROD. If it matches, the waste unit will be remediated in accordance with the remedial approach described in the ROD.

Mr. Prater discussed the key features of the plug-in approach and discussed previous uses of this approach at DOE's Hanford facility and Indian Bend stating the concept was found to accelerate remedial actions and reduce paperwork. It also ensures consistency in decisionmaking, he said. He stated the first waste unit grouping to be considered for this approach consists of reactor basins, the new F&H retention basins, Warners Pond and HP-52. He showed pictures of each of these waste units. He then explained the rationale behind a generic remedy for these basins and the advantages associated with applying the plug-in approach.

Bill Lawless read the subcommittee draft motion (see attached) and a few minor editorial changes were made. The motion will be voted upon at a specially-called November Board meeting.

Thomas Johnson of DOE gave a brief overview of decommissioning and deactivation activities at SRS. The Disposition Program covers the period beginning with the end of operations through the ultimate disposition of all surplus and excess facilities. Multiple SRS parties currently share the responsibilities for facility disposition. An integrated approach for all surplus/excess facilities was provided to DOE in June 1997. The Site Manager challenged the DOE Assistant Managers to develop a sitewide process and initial assessment of priorities by November 1997. Bill Lawless read the Subcommittee's draft motion for the dispositioning of excess and surplus facilities at SRS (see attached). Several minor editorial changes were provided. This motion will be offered again in November.

Brent Daugherty of BNFL gave a presentation on DOE Complex-Wide Environmental Management Integration (see attached). He described what environmental management is, who is involved and the discussed the initiatives which may affect SRS. A project management team consisting of senior managers from ten major sites and a EM Integration team consisting of subject matter experts from major DOE sites worked to identify opportunities to reduce costs, time and risk through complex-wide integration, he said. They used innovative "out of the box" thinking that was not focused on political, regulatory, site equity or stakeholder issues; but was simply focused on technical solutions. The result was a Contractor Report to be used as a basis for discussion in support of the decision-making process. This report provides recommendations that could result in significant savings to the complex, minimized risks and accelerated cleanup.

Mr. Daugherty then presented information regarding DOE incinerators and the individual waste streams. Karen Patterson presented the subcommittee's draft motion regarding EM integration (see attached) by waste stream following Mr. Daugherty's explanation of the recommendations from the EM Integration Team. The EM Integration Team proposed the following:

- that the incinerators at SRS, Oak Ridge and Idaho share in treatment of DOE complex mixed wastes
- that low level mixed waste be disposed at an existing landfill permitted for mixed waste (Hanford) rather than constructing new facilities at multiple sites
- that low level waste be disposed at a central disposal facility (Nevada Test Site) instead of SRS E Area vaults

- that low level mixed alpha waste of 10-100 nCi (that is managed as transuranic waste) be shipped to Idaho for treatment to destroy the organic component of waste prior to disposal
- expansion of the transportation system to allow shipment of high activity Pu238 to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant without expensive thermal treatment
- that SRS provide primary processing capability for Pu238 wastes in the complex

Discussion revolved around transportation regulations, hydrogen gas generation and ventilation, safety measures, waste acceptance criteria. Several minor editorial changes were made to the motion and Board members discussed providing a copy of the recommendation to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Department of Transportation if it is formally adopted in November.

Bill Lawless gave a brief status on the SRL Seepage Basins (see attached). Decision documents on this unit are due in December 1997 and the three agencies are working to define the processes to meet the focus group's expediting schedule expectations. Mr. Lawless also announced that the subcontract for the independent scientific peer review of the Savannah River Intergrator Operable Unit was awarded on 9/22 to Joel Massmann of the University of Washington and a final report is due in December.

### **Nuclear Materials Management Subcommittee Report**

Ken Goad reported he had attended a three-day meeting regarding a canyon utilization study that was looking at all nuclear materials that may require stabilization including plutonium, spent nuclear fuel and special isotopes (over 5000). He said a full presentation on the study would be provided in November.

### **SCDHEC Fish Advisory:**

Ann Ragan of SCDHEC gave a presentation regarding a recent fish advisory from the state to inform citizens about elevated mercury and radionuclide levels in fish from the Savannah River. She discussed fish consumption, emphasizing the advisory recommended that pregnant women and young children not eat fish from the river. She asked the CAB for ideas on how to get the information out to the public, particularly subsistence fisherman. She said she had asked the Centers for Disease Control Health Effects Subcommittee for their ideas and had received the following: Use radio stations; have Wanda Custwell do a fish segment on television; a fish advisory on the SCDHEC web page; fishing shows; bait shops, postings, tie into the food stamp program in grocery stores; and utilize the Corps of Engineers help line.

SRS CAB members offered the following suggestions:

- communicate alternative sources of protein (recipes for beans)
- tie in with fishing licensing
- use cartoons to reach illiterate audiences about substituting fish
- simple messages via the radio
- target teenage pregnancy centers, schools and clinics

- video presentation
- sponsored fishing rodeos with Earth Day
- drawing contests in schools

Discussion also revolved around the need to keep the fish advisory in perspective and not cause alarm. The fish advisory should only serve to help people make an informed choice. It was noted that fish consumption would have to remain at a certain level for a number of years to increase the risk of cancer or neurological damage. Ann Loadholt noted that the many of the cane polers fishing day in and day out are doing so with their beer and cigarettes and she urged SCDHEC to focus efforts on mothers and children. Bill Lawless questioned if a problem even existed and urged SCDHEC not to create a problem.

### **SRS Emergency Preparedness Program**

Len Sjostrom, DOE-SR Assistant Manager for Health, Safety and Technical Support gave a briefing on emergency planning and preparedness at SRS (see attached). This presentation was to give the Board an overview of changes in the SRS mission which impact the scope of emergency planning and preparedness activities. He discussed the principal organizations involved, gave a historical perspective of SRS operations and discussed present and future SRS operations.

Mr. Sjostrom discussed the SRS emergency planning zones and concluded that with no nuclear reactors, there is no regulatory, safety or health basis for maintaining the existing offsite (reactor based) zones. He stated the scope of the emergency program activities should be consistent with the reduced level of SRS hazards and there have been ongoing discussions and reviews with South Carolina and Georgia regarding this as well as initiatives to improve communications with offsite emergency preparedness officials.

Discussion revolved around the types of catastrophes SRS prepares for; lessons learned and the need to communicate when incidents do occur.

### **Administrative Subcommittee Report**

Lane Parker announced that the 1997 membership solicitation campaign began on September 22 and would run through November 21. He requested that each Board member provide five membership packages to potential applicants. He also noted that Board members finishing two-year terms must notify the subcommittee of their intention to run for re-election by November 21. A two-day administrative meeting will be held on December 5-6 in Savannah, Ga. to select membership candidates for thirteen Board positions.

Dawn Haygood gave a brief description of the proposed bylaws amendments to be considered in November. One major change would allow the Board to elect a runner-up candidate to a Board vacancy by acclamation. Another proposed amendment would allow more flexibility within stakeholder categories. Since the Board has been opposed to modifying the demographic requirements, this amendment would allow the Board to have one less representative in each stakeholder category, but no more than ten general public representatives (the category with the largest number of candidates).

## **National Dialogue Discussion and Annual Report**

P.K. Smith provided a trip report on a National Dialogue Pilot Workshop held Sept. 6-7 in Knoxville, Tn. (see attached). She stated the idea of the National Dialogue was good but the workshop fell short of meeting its stated objectives. She commented that not all stakeholders are at the same level of understanding of issues and that the SRS CAB members as informed citizens needed to be patient and work on interacting with other stakeholders. She stated the site specific advisory boards should take the lead on national dialogue and there is a definite need for cross site communication and interaction.

Ms. Smith also asked for any comments regarding the Board's annual report. The report was provided to the full Board prior to the meeting and will be printed in October.

## **Facilitator Update**

Board Facilitator Walt Joseph presented a draft of the Board's first semi-annual newsletter to be called the "Board Beat." Board members were requested to provide any comments by the end of September.

## **Outreach Subcommittee Report**

Subcommittee Chair Lane Parker thanked PK Smith, Tom Costikyan, Karen Patterson and Brendolyn Jenkins for their support of the Citizens for Environmental Justice workshops held in August. He noted other outreach efforts including an article in the SRS News, a letter to the editor from Bill Lawless and Board representation at a recent Sierra Club pot luck dinner. Mr. Parker also noted that a canned presentation is available for Board members to use during speaking engagements. He stated speaker training is available upon request.

## **Afternoon Public Comment Session**

Trish McCracken, Augusta, Ga.

Ms. McCracken questioned whether decommissioning plans were being placed in public reading rooms. She stated she was concerned that facility plans, such as the Old Tritium Facility 232-F, might be being provided to the public even if it is old technology.

Bill Clyburn, Aiken, S.C.

Mr. Clyburn stated he was wearing two hats during the meeting. As a WSRC employee he was here to observe and offer what he could and as a legislator if he could assist with legislation regarding cane pole fisherman, he would be happy to assist.

Tom Williams, Senator Max Cleland's Office, Savannah, Ga.

Mr. Williams stated he was new to Senator's Cleland's staff but looked forward to a continuous relationship with the Board.

## Handouts

- SRS CAB ER&WM Draft Motion: Plug-In ROD Approach
- Status of SRS Facility Disposition Program slides, Thomas Johnson, DOE
- SRS CAB ER&WM Subcommittee Motion on the: SRS Citizens Advisory Board Environmental Remediation & Waste Management Subcommittee Motion on the: Disposition of Excess and Surplus Facilities at SRS.
- SRS Citizens Advisory Board Environmental Remediation & Waste Management Subcommittee Motion on the: EM Integration Plan and Some SRS Specific Recommendations
- SRS Citizens Advisory Board Environmental Remediation & Waste Management Subcommittee Motion on the : EM Integration Plan for DOE Headquarters
- Complex-Wide Environmental Management Integration slides, Brent Daughtery, BNFL
- SRL Seepage Basin Status slides, Bill Lawless
- Savannah River Site Onsite and Offsite Emergency Planning and Preparedness slides, Len Sjostrom, DOE
- National Dialogue Trip Report, PK Smith
- 1996-97 SRS CAB Draft Annual Report
- SRS CAB Board Beat, draft
- DOE News Release dated Sept. 23, 1997
- SRS Citizens Advisory Board August/September Highlights
- SRS Citizens Advisory Board Overview
- NEPA Monthly Operating Report, September 1997
- SRS Public Involvement Calendar, October/November
- SRS CAB Recommendations Summary

*Meeting handouts may be obtained by calling 1-800-249-8155.*

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## Joint Subcommittee Meeting

A joint subcommittee meeting followed the SRS Citizens Advisory Board public meeting on Monday, September 22, 1997. All Board members present for the September Board meeting, approximately four members of the general public and ten SRS support personnel attended. Walt Joseph introduced Terry Spears of the Department of Energy who gave a presentation on the SRS Strategic Plan (see attached).

Mr. Spears described the SRS Strategic Plan, a 20-page document, as the upper tier of integrated planning documents at SRS. He stated that details would be defined in subsequent plans such as the Comprehensive Plan, which will look at sitewide cross-cutting components and Management Implementation Plans, which will provide detailed and business line-specific actions. The last SRS Strategic Plan was issued in April 1996 and is now being revised due to the many changes in the past year, he said. The significant accomplishments achieved such as the startup of the Defense Waste Processing Facility and the Consolidated Incineration Facility; the numerous programmatic decisions made; the new drivers like the Focus 2006 plans and the

DOE-Headquarters strategic plan; and substantial public comments and input drive the need to revise the SRS Strategic Plan, Spears said.

Mr. Spears discussed the SRS strategic vision and three areas of focus for the future. He stated that SRS is a model of performance excellence and the site of choice for DOE's national security, nonproliferation, and environmental quality missions and programs. He highlighted the site's belief in safety as the first priority and stated this is reflected in the site's core values. Mr. Spears discussed five areas of strategic focus. Mr. Spears presented the following four business lines associated with products and services essential to achievement of the site's customer goals:

**National Security** - SRS is ideal location for existing and new National Security mission such as tritium production and plutonium pit production. The SRS goal is global recognition for expertise in tritium operations, production and engineering development.

**Nonproliferation** - SRS is integral to the DOE initiative to reduce the global threat posed by excess nuclear weapons materials. The SRS goal is providing safe, secure, long-term storage and disposition for excess weapons-usable fissile materials and advancing the Department's progress in accountancy of nuclear materials and in achieving international objectives.

**Environmental Quality** - SRS is committed to environmental excellence and meeting accelerated cleanup goals. The SRS goal is to demonstrate excellence in environmental stewardship by stabilizing "in-process" nuclear materials, cleaning up legacy waste, minimizing environmental impacts of operations and protecting SRS natural resources.

**Science and technology** - Provides the scientific basis for Site operations. Laboratories provide vehicles for research partnerships, science and mathematics outreach and transfer of technologies. The SRS goal is to deliver scientific and technological innovations critical to SRS success and the science base of the DOE complex.

The fifth area, corporate management, involves commitment to results and effectiveness essential to the continued success in each business line, he said. Success is based on technical and safety excellence, cost-effectiveness, community support and mission-supportive infrastructure. The SRS goal is to continue to excel in environment, safety and health performance and effectively utilize a skilled workforce.

Mr. Spears stated that a stakeholder focus group will be held on September 30 to obtain input on the SRS Strategic Plan and a final plan will be issued in late October. All public comments are due by October 13.

Discussion revolved around safety requirements for employees and the need for SRS to remain strong in applied science and stay current in nuclear technology. Mr. Spears offered to provide the Board with a report from an external review panel that is currently reviewing resources at Savannah River Technology Center. He noted that many people are retiring and there is some partnering with national laboratories to maintain interactions and develop the science base, however it is a difficult challenge and SRS is not necessarily winning the battle.

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