



SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Environmental Remediation and Waste Management Subcommittee

Meeting Record

October 27, 1998
N. Augusta Community Center
North Augusta, SC

The CAB ER&WM subcommittee met on October 27, 1998 at the North Augusta Community Center, in North Augusta, SC. CAB members present included CAB ER&WM subcommittee co-chairs Bill Lawless and Kathryn May and members Karen Patterson, Maria Reichmanis and Wade Waters. Todd Crawford, technical advisor to the CAB was in attendance. Attending from DOE-SR were Rod Rimando, Thomas Johnson, Brian Hennessey, Virgil Sauls and DOE ADDFO Gerri Flemming. Leigh Beatty attended from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC). Attending from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was Ken Feely. Chuck Powers attended from the Consortium for Risk Evaluation with Stakeholder Participation (CRESP). Attending from the Augusta Chronicle was Brandon Haddock. Attending from WSRC/BSRI/BNFL were Paul Sauerborn, Elmer Wilhite, Sonny Goldston, Jim Moore, Helen Villasor, Gerry Stejskal, Jay Rumsey, Kelly Way, Bruce Hewett, Steve Piccolo, Bob Hinds, Bob Aylward, Joe Price, Ron Steve, Dennis Hadlock, and Phil Crotwell. Peter Gray, Murray Riley, Lee Poe, Bill McDonell, Jim Pope, John Adams, Russ Messick, Dave Amick, Patricia McCracken, Mike French, Greg Peterson attended from the public.

Bill Lawless opened the meeting by asking for any public comments. At that time Peter Gray read a letter he sent to Bill Lawless and the ER/WM Subcommittee on October 27th. In his letter Mr. Gray expressed his objection to the recent steps taken at Heavy Water Components Test Reactor (HWCTR), and that if no other work will be performed at HWCTR for at least 60 years, that all the living technical resources would not be around to assist in the final decommissioning of the unit. Mr. Gray pointed out that it is still not out of the question to use Entombment of the facility in lieu of the current Dismantlement program. Mr. Lawless asked that Mr. Grays letter be forwarded to Greg Rudy for comment and response to the ER/WM Subcommittee and to Mr. Gray. Patricia McCracken, member of the public expressed her concern over the article in the CAB Bulletin that talked about the shipment of Savannah River Laboratory (SRL) contaminated soil to Utah. Ms. McCracken said that it certainly did not seem a reasonable alternative from her perspective. No other public comment was given.

Mr. Poe presented a overview of the Stakeholder Review of HLW Salt Disposition Alternatives (Replacement for ITP Process). Mr. Poe explained the process his group used as a means to provide a scientific and defensible conclusion. The conclusion identified four possible alternatives. The alternatives were not placed in any order of preference. The group was pleased with their findings and certainly believe they will be useful to those that have the final decision making power. Mr. Poe said that the weaknesses in this phase of the project were as follows: Evaluation criteria did not measure public and political acceptance of alternatives (this was addressed in the next phase of the project), and that more consideration was needed for auxiliary waste streams as they affect cost, facility size, etc. (this will be addressed in the design phase). Bill Lawless asked if cost played a part in the analysis, and the answer given was no. Mr. Lawless also asked if there was any consideration for development of new technologies, and the answer was that they were not considered because of the cost and development time relative to the schedule. Additionally, the team had reviewed 130 alternatives. Mr. Lawless commented that we should not switch from precipitation technologies solely because problems had been found with ITP; there are always problems discovered during the development of any new technology,

especially unforeseen consequences; switching from precipitation to other technologies would not prevent developing unforeseen consequences with their own technologies. Bill McDonell said that a campaign to educate the general public about ITP, its history and future should be considered. This was supported by Steve Piccolo.

Howard Gnann (DOE Project Mgr.) followed Mr. Poe with the current status of ITP. He provided a schedule indicating WSRC would present its final recommendation to DOE by 10/28/98. Steve Piccolo stated that there would be DOE Headquarters review of the recommended process. Bill Lawless asked about funding and Mr. Gnann indicated that there would be approximately \$25,000,000 to pursue two alternatives in Fiscal Year 1999. This would allow both the preferred and alternative recommendations to be carried into the conceptual design phase. Trish McCracken asked about the make up of the West Valley vitrified High Level Waste, and Mr. Gnann indicated that it was characteristically very similar to SRS Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) waste. Jim Pope stated strongly that if the option of placing large quantities of Cesium 137 into saltcrete was considered, then the public would be very concerned.

Rod Rimando introduced the next agenda item on the Old Radioactive waste Burial Ground (ORWBG). Mr. Rimando indicated that this was an abbreviated version of the presentation made during the Old Radioactive Waste Burial Ground Public Workshop held in Aiken on Sept.16. Mr. Rimando pointed out the location and make up of the burial ground, at which time Mr. Poe asked the location of the solvent tanks. Mr. Rimando pointed the tanks location out for Mr. Poe. Bill Lawless suggested during the presentation that there should be a focus group formed on this effort. Mr. Wade Waters said that he was from coastal city where public perception of SRS needed to be improved and that the slides needed to show the severity of the problem; subsequently, Mr. Rimando showed the more serious items of concern in the burial ground. Ed Mcnamee stated that the ORWBG has been handled differently than normal EPA, DHEC assessments. The regulators and the site agreed not to perform the normal characterization of the burial ground, but to use the disposal records in lieu of the formal characterization; thus eliminating potential worker exposure to the contamination.

Brian Hennessey made a presentation on the Plug in ROD for the C,K,L,P Area Reactor Basins. Mr. Hennessey explained the concept of the plug-in and how the selected sites fit the criteria for this approach. Bill Lawless requested a list of other candidates for the plug in approach. Brian Hennessey stated that he could address Regulator comments at the Nov. 10th meeting of the Subcommittee. Bill McDonell asked Mr. Hennessey what was to be accomplished by remediating these sites. Mr. Hennessey responded that remediation would prohibit the migration of the Constituents of Concern (COC) to the groundwater. Mr. Poe made three observations regarding the plug in concept. 1. NRRB has bias for treatment, 2. A hazard needs to be defined to take action on something, and 3. The plug in rod is good and we should not push at this time for other possible candidates.

Sonny Goldston began his presentation by discussing the low level and mixed low level waste options and the preferred alternatives from the Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (WM PEIS) which had been presented at a previous ER&WM Subcommittee meeting by Bill Noll, DOE-SR (September 14, 1998). Mr. Goldston then discussed the Low Level Waste Seminar in Nevada in August where Brendolyn Jenkins, Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) representative, suggested that a useful method of getting input from the various Site Specific Advisory Boards (SSABs) would be to have each SSAB rank order the options. Mr. Goldston said that this suggestion was enthusiastically received by the Low-Level Waste Seminar participants, including the Department of Energy (DOE). As a result of Ms. Jenkin's proposal, DOE prepared an information package on pending low-level and mixed low-level waste disposal decisions. Copies of the document were sent to all SSABs as well as to state and tribal government working group members as a working tool to assist stakeholders in understanding the options presented by DOE. Mr. Goldston noted that while it has been reported that not all SSABs were intending to participate in rank ordering the options, the SRS CAB was deeply interested in reviewing the options and ranking them based on cost, fatalities (worker and transportation), mission continuity, groundwater protection and equity.

Based on the information derived from the information package, on low-level waste disposal, in Option Number 1, all DOE low-level radioactive waste that is shipped somewhere for disposal, Nevada would take 90 percent of the waste. In Option Number 2, for all the waste that would be shipped, Nevada would take 40 percent of the waste, Hanford would take 60 percent of the waste. In Option Number 3, there is an East-West Coast regional disposal option, in this case for those wastes shipped offsite for disposal somewhere, SRS would take 60% of the waste and Nevada would take 40 percent of the waste. In Option Number 4, SRS would take 30 percent of the waste, Nevada would take 70 percent of the waste, and the difference between Option 3 and 4 is that in Option 4, Oak Ridge would dispose of its own waste. In Option Number 5, Nevada would accept 47 percent of the waste, SRS would accept 53 percent of the waste, and Oak Ridge disposes of 37 percent of the waste on its own site instead of shipping it to one of the candidate disposal sites. In Option Number 6, all 100% of the waste would be shipped to Nevada. In this case Oak Ridge ships all of its waste to Nevada. In response to a question, it was noted that the Oak Ridge LLW disposal operations are not environmentally acceptable because their disposal sites are close to the groundwater (water table is very high). As a result, Oak Ridge uses concrete casks for storing low-level waste; however, Oak Ridge is not disposing of its waste at this time, they are storing it while awaiting a decision on the WM PEIS.

On mixed low-level waste, the options are as follows. In Option A, Hanford disposes of 99 percent of the waste which is to be shipped offsite to other facilities. In Option B, Hanford takes 65 percent of the waste, Nevada takes 35 percent. In Option C, Hanford takes 20 percent, SRS would take 80 percent of the mixed waste. In this case, SRS has no disposal facilities approved by the regulators for mixed low-level waste; therefore, SRS would have to build a mixed waste disposal facility. In Option D, Hanford would take 100 percent of the mixed waste which would be shipped from other sites. Mr. Goldston concluded with Option E, where Nevada would take 100 percent of the MLLW waste. A question was posed as to whether the disposal concept was the same for all sites within the DOE complex and whether each site has to meet the same criteria. Mr. Goldston responded that all sites must meet the same criteria that DOE has established for the disposal of low-level waste. However, to meet that criteria, some sites have different treatment methods for their waste. For example, some of SRS's high activity (high radionuclide concentration) low-level waste requires vault disposal while Nevada may allow the waste to be disposed of in their trenches. In response to a question on equity for the disposal of low-level waste, Mr. Goldston replied that equity will be a major factor in selecting the appropriate options. Bill Lawless said that the ER&WM Subcommittee has taken steps to address the options in a draft motion that was presented at the meeting. Mr. Lawless noted that the DOE information package was also available at the meeting for the public to review. Mr. Lawless enthusiastically invited the attendees to review both the information package and the draft motion and provide comments before the next meeting which will be held on November 10, 1998. Mr. Lawless asked that Karen Patterson present the draft motion to the full Board at its November 17, 1998 meeting in Columbia, SC.

There being no other issues, Mr. Lawless thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

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