



SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Environmental Remediation and Waste Management Subcommittee

Meeting Summary

September 21, 1999
Partridge Inn
Augusta, GA

CAB Members

Bill Lawless*
Kathryn May*
Maria Reichmanis*
Wade Waters
Murray Riley*

Stakeholders

Lee Poe
Bill McDonell
Brandon Haddock
Christina Witkowski
Michele Boyd
Ethan Brown
Natayla Gazetova
Boris Nekrasov
Alekssei Toropov

DOE/Contractors

George Mishra, DOE
Julie Petersen, DOE
John Reynolds, DOE
Larry Ling, DOE
Dale Ormond, DOE
Bill Noll, DOE
Peter Hudson, BNFL
Joe D'Amelio, WSRC
Sonny Goldston, WSRC
Tim Coffield, WSRC
Kelly Way, WSRC
Steve Piccolo, WSRC
Mary Flora, WSRC
Chris Bergren, BSRI
Paul Sauerborn, WSRC
Helen Villasor, WSRC

Regulators

Craig Marriner, SCDHEC
None, EPA

* Denotes ER&WM Subcommittee Member

Agenda Review: Bill Lawless opened by inviting introductions from the participants and asking for public comments.

Public Comments: Lee Poe commented that a public hearing on the Yucca Mountain Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be held in the Aiken-Augusta area. Bill Lawless concurred.

Issues: Many stakeholders in the Aiken-Augusta may be unable to travel to the Georgia International Convention Center, College Park, GA (near Atlanta) to attend the public hearings that will be held from 12 p.m. – 3 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on October 21, 1999.

Actions: The ER&WM subcommittee should support the Risk Management and Future Use Subcommittee on CAB Recommendation No. 85, "Public Hearings on Geologic Repository for the

Disposal of spent Nuclear Fuel and High Level Waste at Yucca Mountain EIS" that recommends DOE hold an additional public hearing on this EIS in the Aiken-Augusta area.

Schedule Review: Helen Villasor reviewed the upcoming ER&WM meeting schedule for the remainder of 1999. Bill Lawless requested that a meeting on Decontamination and Decommissioning (D&D) be added to issues matrix for the December-January timeframe (the D&D table for risks presented to the ER&WM Subcommittee last year was included in the *Environmental Report for 1998*). Mr. Lawless also asked the participants to contact Mrs. Villasor if there were any additional issues that should be included on the matrix.

Transuranic (TRU) Waste Overview/Update: Dale Ormond briefed the attendees on Savannah River Site's (SRS) drum retrieval and vent and purge operations, the "Ship to WIPP" Program, shipment of TRU wastes containing Pu-238, and the status of transportation issues. Mr. Ormond said that drum retrieval operations were complete, more than 8700 drums have been retrieved, and venting operations are expected to be complete by December. Mr. Ormond also commended Westinghouse Savannah River Company on its successful and safe TRU Program emphasizing that the use of technology played an important role. The Carlsbad audit was reviewed, which concluded that the SRS program is fundamentally sound; however, a more significant number of drums (~50) need to be processed to obtain approval. SRS's goal is to make its first shipment in February 2000. Additionally, the WIPP Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) permit is expected within the next 60 days. With regard to the shipping of SRS's TRU waste containing Pu-238, cited were the use of hydrogen getter technology, matrix depletion studies and the Mixed Waste Focus Area Fiscal Year 2000 funding, which is focused primarily on TRU waste containing Pu-238 issues in support of SRS needs. The presentation was concluded with the status on transportation issues and the application to revise the TRUPACT-II content codes. Bill Lawless requested the participants to review the shipment of TRU waste containing Pu-238 draft motion going before the full Board on September 28, 1999.

Issues: Implementation of corrective actions identified in the Carlsbad audit and certify waste certification process before return audit. Mitigate the generation of gas in Pu-238 waste to increase gram loading per drum. Ability to meet initial shipment schedule and remaining shipments annually until a TRU repackaging facility will be required at SRS (~2008). Examine funding issues for long-range programs.

Actions: If the same chemical reaction of the hydrogen in the drums that acts as a scavenger can be applied to Pu-238, then explore hydrogen limits with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Encourage publishing a paper for WM'2000 or writing a report for DOE-HQ identifying findings and implications of SRS's safe and successful TRU Waste Program. TRU program is to return in November to provide a presentation to the subcommittee on the RCRA permit, waste certification process and funding issues. Lee Poe to provide words for commendation in the draft motion on the good work performed by the TRU program to date.

Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (WMPEIS) Mixed/LowLevel (M/LLW) Records of Decision (RODs) Update: Bill Noll provided a brief update on the WMPEIS and two RODs that DOE -HQ has been working on. Referencing the preferred alternatives on the M/LLW RODs (six for low-level waste disposal; five for mixed-waste disposal) that were presented to the CAB in 1998, it was noted that the RODs included a combination of recommendations. For example, SRS could become the East Coast regional low-level waste disposal site. However, while the RODs were still in the discussion phase with the National Governor's Conference, Secretary Richardson came into office and decided to take up the issue personally with the governors of the eight states involved. Copies of the Principles of Agreements signed by Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson with four of the states including South Carolina Governor James Hodges, Colorado Governor Bill Owens, Tennessee Governor Don Sundquist and Washington Governor Gary Locke in Denver, CO on September 10, 1999 were distributed to the participants.

Issues: Focus on waste management, and where the waste will go. Negotiations are still ongoing with the Secretary and his staff. It is not an easy task to resolve issue of state equity. Much of SRS's TRU waste is

mixed waste and is tied up in the Site Treatment Plan (STP), and while schedules are not established in the STP, milestones are.

Actions: Bill Lawless is interacting with Ann Clark of SCDHEC to amplify whether shipment of TRU waste containing PU-238 is included in the Principles of Agreements. Because the STP is governed by Consent Orders and updated annually, an update of the STP is requested for presentation to the subcommittee in December. Issue of state equity can be addressed during the Solid Waste Environmental Management Integration (EMI) Program Areas presentation at the October 20, 1999 ER&WM Subcommittee meeting.

Pollution Prevention (P2) Update/Draft Motion Review: Sonny Goldston revisited the P2 presentation that had been provided to the subcommittee in June 1999. A draft motion had been developed and scheduled for presentation to the full Board at its bi-monthly meeting in July. However, because of a full agenda for that meeting, the P2 draft motion was deferred to the September full board meeting.

Issues: Is recommendation 3 credible, i.e., "Assure the CAB and the public that in view of DOE National P2 funding reductions, SRS has available a source of investment funds to continue to invest in future P2 projects"; SRS is to remain accountable in the P2 program.

Actions: Tim Coffield is to provide additional information to strengthen recommendation 3.

Alternative Salt Update: Steve Piccolo reviewed ITP research and development to date and reported that all work scope experimentation with simulant or real waste is complete and that data review is in progress. Open technology under evaluation as possible replacements for the In-Tank Precipitation (ITP) Facility includes grout, precipitation, CST Ion Exchange, and caustic side solvent extraction. Mr. Piccolo indicated that all of these technologies could be made to work; some will be more expensive and less effective than others. However, Mr. Piccolo noted that cost tradeoffs would have to be considered. Independent reviews that have been accomplished to date were discussed and include the Independent Project Evaluation Team, the National Academy of Science and the CAB's own ITP Focus Group. High Level Waste officials are now in the process of reevaluating the final four technologies and are awaiting the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. Westinghouse Savannah River Company is to recommend a path forward to DOE in early October.

Issues: Stakeholder issues include regulatory acceptability, qualification; public education and acceptability of using grout; public education of the Precipitation process since this technology failed once so why try it again; and the offsite release potential if CST Ion Exchange is selected. There is considerable public concern over contractor replacement costs and delays.

Actions: The CAB should assist and do all it can to ensure that high-level waste is vitrified and shipped out of state. Confirm role and involvement of the Defense Facilities National Defense Board (DNFSB) as an additional independent reviewer.

Ethan Brown ITP Discussion: Mr. Ethan Brown, director of the Energy and Environment Project, who has been invited to lead the ITP Focus Group, briefed the participants on concerns regarding the ITP failure in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, Congress, newspaper articles, and Peter Jennings' ABC News Report. Mr. Brown provided a brief outline of what he sees as the possible scope of the Focus Group; however, Mr. Brown noted that the charter of the Focus Group would be developed by the members. Some potential parameters laid out in Mr. Brown's presentation included developing a consensus position on ITP issues and deciding what the group can do to assist in gaining public acceptance. Gaining support from CAB and ITP Focus Group members who were present, Mr. Brown professed his sincere appreciation to the participants and said he is coming to the group wanting to try and help.

Issues: Small tank ITP faces public perception problems. Determine the objectives of the CAB ITP Focus Group.

Actions: Explore all voices in opposition as the best path forward to achieve a consensus on the issue. Continue with the same CAB focus group (all members) and invite Ethan Brown, director of the Energy and Environment Project in Columbia, SC to work with members of the board and public and SRS to achieve a consensus position on ITP issues.

Final Public Comments: Mr. Brown introduced three visitors that he is hosting from the Tomsk Environmental Students Inspectorate (TESI) in Tomsk, Russia. The visitors spoke through a translator, Michele Boyd, and told the participants that one of their major concerns is nuclear safety and the ability to provide radiation monitoring in Russia's nuclear cities. TESI, a non-government organization is also responsible for helping to bring assistance such as the reduction of electricity bills to residents who are considered to be of higher risk because their homes surround nuclear power plants.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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