

Recommendation #258
TRU Waste Disposition Program Follow-up

Background

The Department of Energy (DOE), Savannah River Site (SRS) Waste Disposition Programs Division provided the SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Waste Management Committee an update (Ref. 1) on August 12, 2008, of Transuranic (TRU) waste disposition regarding CAB Recommendation #251 (Ref. 2). Current SRS TRU waste inventory includes:

1. Approximately 3,300 55-gallon drums,
2. Approximately 4,000 cubic meters of large box waste, and
3. Waste covered under TRU Pad 1- high activity (HA) TRU.

SRS planned FY 2008 TRU waste accomplishments include:

1. Ship 3,500 drums to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP),
2. Remove all TRU waste from Pads 7-13 (cleared),
3. Complete drum remediation activities at F-Canyon, and
4. Complete testing of large box non-destructive assay (NDA) and non-destructive examination (NDE) systems.

In addition, SRS TRU waste FY 2009 planned accomplishments include:

1. Completing shipments of TRU waste drums to WIPP (30,000 drums disposed when completed),
2. Resource Conservations and Recovery Act (RCRA) closure (Site Treatment Plan commitment by March 2009) of TRU pads 7-13,
3. Receipt of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) license on TRUPACT-III, and
4. WIPP certify large box non-destructive assaying (NDA) and non-destructive examination NDE systems.

The first TRU shipment offsite occurred on May 8, 2001. DOE-SRS is making three shipments per week to WIPP averaging 250 drums per month.

Comment

DOE-SRS should be commended and congratulated on their achievement in approaching the end of the legacy TRU waste drum shipments from SRS to the WIPP. TRU waste operations will continue at SRS for years after the removal of the legacy TRU waste.

However, in the future, operations producing TRU wastes will send them directly from a production location to packaging, certification, and shipment to WIPP, unlike the legacy wastes, which underwent years of storage at SRS without plans for treatment or disposition.

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While progress has been made, challenges persist that include:

1. Available funding to support continued acceleration of legacy TRU waste disposition beyond FY09,
2. Technical challenges with TRUPACT-III and large box NDE, and
3. Appropriate completion date for disposition of legacy TRU waste.

Recommendation

The SRS-CAB recommends that DOE-SRS:

1. Ensure the SRS funding for FY 2009 is at a level that continues to address the highest risk reduction activities to complete the removal of all legacy TRU waste no later than FY 2013.
2. Provide a FY09 budget update to the CAB when it is known and assess the plans for disposition alternatives for all SRS legacy TRU waste with the goal of disposition of all waste by 2013.
3. The CAB requests that DOE-SRS provide an update to the Committee and the Board on the status of TRU Pad 1 disposition scope and schedule.
4. Provide assurances that efforts are in place to step up obtaining the NRC license for the TRUPACT-III; invite the NRC to brief the CAB on obtaining the necessary license; and inform the CAB about what it can do to assist in resolving technical issues with TRUPACT-III to ensure meeting the 2013 end date.
5. Define completion date of WIPP certification of large box NDA and NDE systems and invite Carlsbad (WIPP) to discuss and outline steps with the CAB Waste Management Committee and Board and the appropriate regulatory parties to resolve technical issues with large box NDE to ensure meeting the 2013 end date.

References

1. Presentation to Citizens Advisory Board Waste Management Committee – Update on the Transuranic (TRU) Waste Disposition, presentation by Mike Simmons – DOE-Savannah River Operations Office, Waste Disposition Program Division, August 12, 2008.
2. Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation No #251 (adopted November 27, 2007) “Accelerate the TRU Waste Disposition Program”.

Agency Responses

[Department of Energy-SR](#)