

Recommendation #264
SRS Recovery Act Footprint Reduction

Background

From the Government's web site: "The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is an unprecedented effort to jumpstart our economy, create or save millions of jobs, and put a down payment on addressing long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century ... The Act provides for unprecedented levels of transparency and accountability so that you will be able to know how, when, and where your tax dollars are being spent." [1]

From the Department of Energy's (DOE) web site: "The Act is an extraordinary response to a crisis unlike any since the Great Depression, and includes measures to modernize our nation's infrastructure, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, preserve and improve affordable health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need." [2]

From DOE Secretary S. Chu, " The passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act began a new era at the Department of Energy." [2].

The DOE Environmental Management web site lists the ARRA budget for DOE-EM at \$6.0B [3]. DOE Savannah River Site (SRS) will receive \$1.6 billion [4, slide 13]. It has two aims:

1. To "accelerate the completion of existing environmental protection and site cleanup goals by many years, reducing the EM footprint at the SRS approximately 40% by September 2011, eliminating environmental threats and reducing life-cycle costs."
2. It "fulfills the Government's responsibility to address nuclear weapons waste; allows earlier completion of legal compliance milestones; and enables reuse of DOE resources, including land and infrastructure, for other energy missions or community reuse through long-term leases. Moreover, EM sites can be used to establish Energy Parks once they are cleaned up, providing long-term quality jobs across a wide range of skills, thus supporting the President's energy goals." [4]

The two goals under ARRA for SRS are interlinked. They will accomplish the following:

Footprint reduction:

Area Closures (P, R, D, and M).

Area Acceleration (A and N).

Disposition of all legacy transuranic wastes (4,500 cubic meters)

Consolidation of RCRA waste storage in E-Area

Disposition of 16,000 drums of depleted uranium oxide (UO₂).

Increasing land available for future missions:

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Energy Parks (Energy security, new long-term missions, and sustainable jobs)

Comments

Overall, the SRS CAB is pleased with the ARRA stimulus plan for SRS, and we fully support the plan. However, there are some points that we wish to raise about the plan.

At the March 24, 2009 SRS CAB meeting in Aiken, SC, South Carolina's Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) requested that stimulus budget funds be made available to accelerate the liquid waste program by helping with bulk removal and HLW tank closure.

Potential problems may exist with the liquid waste system's critical path that the availability of stimulus dollars may help to overcome. The critical path is very complex for which a lot of uncertainty exists and the availability of extra dollars may help to avoid blockages in the critical path.

The SRS CAB believes that liquid wastes are interdependent with the ARRA goals to "accelerate the completion of existing ... site cleanup goals ... eliminating environmental threats, and reducing life-cycle costs". Moreover, the SRS liquid waste program is on the critical path for DOE-EM.

Some areas at SRS where problems in the liquid waste critical path could arise:

- Assuring feed to DWPF
- Removing bulk wastes from the tanks
- Removing salt
- Preventing criticalities in ARP
- Sealing cooling coils in tanks to be closed
- Maintaining tank storage space
- Saltstone and SWPF operations

Recommendations

SRS CAB recommends to DOE that:

1. DOE consider allowing a portion of its ARRA plan to permit expenditures that include additional support when needed to resolve the bottlenecks that may arise, to optimize high-level waste (HLW) treatment and its infrastructure, and to enhance the removal of residuals from HLW tanks in the liquid waste management program's critical path.
2. DOE report back to the SRS CAB on the progress of all of SRS's ARRA programs and expenditures on a regular basis.

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References

1. www.recovery.gov
2. www.energy.gov/recovery/
3. www.em.doe.gov/emrecovery/EMRecovery.aspx
4. H. Belencan presentation to the DOE Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board Meeting (2009, March 24), SRS Recovery Act Footprint Reduction Project.

Agency Responses

[Department of Energy-SR](#)