

**Savannah River Site
Citizens Advisory Board**

**Recommendation # 282
Impact of Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendations
on SRS Programs**

Background

The president established a Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) in January 2010 to conduct a comprehensive review of policies for managing the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle and to recommend a new plan. This study was taken in the wake of his decision to cease all work on the federal repository at Yucca Mountain and to establish a different path forward. The impact of these actions has been felt on a number of major programs at Savannah River Site (SRS) - most notably the disposition of Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) waste canisters, the plutonium disposition concepts, and the approach for disposition of research reactor spent nuclear fuel (RRSNF) at SRS. The draft BRC study was issued in July 2011, and the document is subject to review and comment until late 2011. It is not clear when the final report will be issued. However, with the study being on the order of two years, the additional delay time can potentially have a significant impact on the schedule of some of the SRS programs.

In view of these unavoidable delays, the CAB feels it would be wise to complete as much preplanning as possible and be ready to act promptly once the final report is issued.

Comments

The delay resulting from the BRC final report recommendations will probably have minimal impact on some of the SRS programs. For example, the development of a new federal repository will require many years and will likely for all practical purposes not impact the schedule for DWPF canister storage requirements or canister shipments.

In the case of plutonium (Pu) disposition, BRC recommendations may have minimal impact if the present planning continues such that low grade Pu is shipped out of SRS consistent with facility limitations and no further external imposed dates, such as one imposed by a National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) decision, causes a delay.

In the case of Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) the impact of BRC recommendations appear to be less certain from our viewpoint. In any event, the CAB urges that disposition preplanning for all nuclear materials and wastes are aggressive and timely such that any facility modifications, NEPA schedule needs, etc., can be accommodated with a minimum of further delay.

While the delays of the BRC recommendations are inevitable, the CAB does remind the DOE that the CAB has been patient with DOE disposition planning. For example, the CAB has been involved in disposition planning for Pu in excess of 10 years, awaiting some NEPA document decisions for Pu for close to three years, and awaiting the SNF system plan for two years. Any measures possible to expedite activities would be appreciated.

This recommendation urges prompt and timely planning with regard to the impact of the Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendations on Site Operations and the issuance of final NEPA documentation for Spent Nuclear Fuel and Plutonium disposition.

Recommendations: The SRS Citizens Advisory Board recommends that DOE:

1. Report to the CAB when the Site will be in a position to state the nature and type of impacts of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Site materials disposition plans.
2. Report to the CAB when and how the Site will factor Blue Ribbon Committee Recommendations into the NEPA documents for plutonium and Spent Nuclear Fuel and appropriate final disposition plans issued.

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Adopted September 27, 2011
Sponsored by the Nuclear Materials Committee