

**Recommendation #297**

Concern the Salt Waste Processing Facility will not open according to the schedule of Liquid Waste System Plan Rev. 17

**Background**

The Savannah River Site is currently in the process of closing tanks and equipment used for earlier missions of the site. The tanks are contaminated with a variety of nuclear constituents that are remnants from the earlier uses.

The process for cleaning wastes from the tanks requires the separation of the high activity nuclear constituents from the aqueous and other contaminants. The high activity nuclear constituents are then fixed into a glass matrix in the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) and residue is encapsulated as part of the grout in the Salt Stone Facility.

The current process for separating the aqueous and nuclear materials consists of an Actinide Removal Process (ARP) and a Modular Caustic Side Solvent Extraction Unit (MCU). This facility has provided the ability to process materials from tank cleanup and provides the ability to demonstrate, refine and improve the technology. The existing processes do not have the capacity to handle the volume of cleanup materials to be generated according to the Liquid Waste System Plan Rev. 17.

In order to provide sufficient capacity to handle the required volumes a larger facility, the Salt Waste Processing Facility (SWPF) has been approved and is currently in the construction phase. Completion of the SWPF facility on time is the subject of an enforceable agreement between the Department of Energy and the State of South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control involving the Solid Waste Permit for Saltstone. The agreed to start-up date for SWPF is October 2015.

The CAB is concerned that technical; construction, staffing or funding issues could result in the delay of the SWPF. This would result in the failure of the DOE to meet its commitments to South Carolina and to comply with Liquid Waste System Plan Rev. 17 and slow down the disposition of high level waste.

**Recommendations:**

The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board recommends that DOE:

1. Inform the CAB of any issues that could delay the startup of SWPF in accordance with Liquid Waste System Plan Rev. 17 and the agreements with the state of South Carolina
2. Include all funding required to meet the October 2015 deadline for SWPF construction, DWPF and HLW tank closure in its FY 2013, 2014, & 2015 budget requests