

Savannah River Site

Citizens Advisory Board

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### **Recommendation 310**

#### Budget Requests Sufficient for Liquid Waste Milestones

##### **Background**

The Savannah River Site (SRS) has 37,000,000 gallons of liquid nuclear waste remaining from the various defense missions dating back to the early 1950's. The State of South Carolina considers this waste the most dangerous environmental issue in the state. Since the mid 1990's the Department of Energy (DOE) site has assumed the mission of cleaning the tanks, stabilizing the wastes and decommissioning the tanks.

This cleanup mission is the subject of an enforceable agreement with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA ) referred to as the Federal Facility Agreement and General Closure Plans (FFA). This agreement requires the Department Of Energy to request funding for and execute plans that would clean up the 20 remaining tanks by 2022.

Cleanup consists of emptying the tanks by a. processing the liquid fraction through the Actinide Removal Process (ARP) and the Modular Caustic Units (MCU) until a larger facility is operational i.e. The Salt Waste Process Facility (SWPF) in operational. The contaminated water from these separation processes is stabilized as grout in the Saltstone facility and the highly radioactive material is put into glass canisters in the Defense Waste Processing facility. The glass canisters are being stored at SRS until a long term repository is available.

Liquid Waste System Plan Revision 18 calls for the cleaning and closing of 16 tanks at dates later than agreed to in the FFA. In addition tank cleanup and closure will be delayed from 2022 as required by the FFA until 2028.

The FFA requires that the DOE request sufficient funding to complete tank cleaning and closing on schedule. In the 2014 budget, the DOE is not asking for sufficient for SWPF or Liquid Waste Cleanup to meet the FFA commitments. DOE has shifted funds from SRS to Hanford and other locations leaving SRS to absorb the entire shortfall in the DOE budget request.

The SRS Citizens' Advisory Board understands the current financial problems for the Federal Government however these problems do not discharge the DOE's obligations to request sufficient funding to meet their obligations. Requesting sufficient funding means the sufficient funding be requested under all budget scenarios not just selected scenarios.

The plans of the DOE to not request the proper funding to meet the FFA commitment is undermining the credibility and transparency of the DOE at a time when community support is

needed more than ever. In addition penalties from the State of South Carolina are a real possibility as well as an undermining of the cooperative attitude of the state and local citizens.

**Recommendations**

The Savannah River Citizens Advisory Board Recommends:

1. The Department of Energy include in the 2015 budget request sufficient funding to meet all FFA commitments to clean and close the liquid waste tanks at SRS.
2. In the future, all budget requests will contain the sufficient funding to meet FFA requirements in all the scenarios submitted.