



Environmental Bulletin

Volume 11, Number 17
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from the Savannah River Site

Public comments accepted through January 23, 2001

Tank Closure Draft EIS distributed

The Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River Operations Office (SR) has published for public review and comment the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed closing of additional high-level waste (HLW) tanks at the Savannah River Site (SRS).

DOE-SR proposes to close the tank systems to protect human health and the environment. These proposed closures would be in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, DOE Orders, and the previously published document, Industrial Wastewater Closure Plan for F- and H-Area High-Level Waste Tanks Systems, prepared by DOE and approved by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC).

The Draft EIS evaluates three alternatives regarding closure of the HLW tanks: (1) Clean and Stabilize Tanks; (2) Clean and Remove Tanks; and the (3) No Action Alternative. Under the Clean and Stabilize Tanks alternative, DOE is considering three options for tank stabilization: fill with grout (preferred alternative); fill with sand; and fill with saltstone.

DOE has closed two SRS high-level waste tanks in accordance with the Closure Plan and applicable DOE Orders. Tank 20 and Tank 17 were certified closed by SCDHEC in July 1997 and December 1997, respectively. SRS is committed in the Federal Facilities Agreement to close another high-level waste tank by FY2003. While SRS will not be closing any high-level waste tanks until the EIS process is completed, waste removal operations will continue. The schedule for preparation and completion of the EIS fully supports schedules and plans for additional tank closures.

The publication of the Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS in the Federal Register begins the public comment period, which extends through January 23, 2001. The Department will hold two public meetings, each with two sessions to discuss the Draft EIS and receive comments. Dates and locations of those public meetings are listed.

The Draft EIS is available on request from the contact listed or on the Internet at the DOE National Environmental Policy

Act (NEPA) website at <http://tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa> under DOE NEPA Analyses. It is also available in the following information repositories:

- DOE Public Reading Room, Gregg-Graniteville Library, University of South Carolina-Aiken campus in Aiken, SC.
- DOE-Headquarters Public Reading Room at the Forrestal Building (Room 1E-190), 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC.

Comments on the Draft EIS may be submitted orally or in writing to DOE at the January 2001 public meetings; sent by facsimile or voice mail to 1-800-881-7292; sent by electronic mail to nepa@srs.gov; or mailed to Mr. Andrew Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer, DOE-SR, Building 742, Room 185, Aiken, SC 29802 (ATTN: Tank Closure Draft EIS).

In preparing the Final EIS, DOE will consider all comments transmitted or postmarked by January 23, 2001. Comments submitted after this date will be considered to the extent practicable.

Tank Closure Draft EIS Public Meetings

January 9, 2001

North Augusta Community Center

101 Brookside Drive

North Augusta, South Carolina

1-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. (repeat sessions)

January 11, 2001

Holiday Inn Coliseum

630 Assembly Street

Columbia, South Carolina

1-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. (repeat sessions)

DOE requests modifications to the 1992 RCRA Part B Permit Renewal

DOE-Savannah River Operations Office has requested from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) modifications to SRS's 1992 Resource Conservation and Recover Act (RCRA) Part B Permit Renewal Application for Volume III.

This modification details Dynamic Underground Stripping (DUS) operations at the M-Area Hazardous Waste Management Facility (HWMF). SRS is currently operating the DUS system under a temporary authorization issued by SCDHEC in May 2000. That authorization expires on 12/28/2000. Therefore, DOE has also requested a 180 day extension to the temporary authorization that would allow the DUS system to continue to operate until the permit modification can be reviewed and approved by SCDHEC.

The revision (Revision 13 of Volume III) allows SRS to continue operation of the DUS as a corrective action technology demonstration. It also updates the well list based on SCDHEC comments received on the Revision 12 modification.

This notice begins a 60-day comment period. More information, including the actual permit applications, is available for review and copying at the DOE Public Reading Room located in the University of South Carolina-Aiken Library, or by contacting personnel identified in this notice. The

Permittee's compliance history during the life of the permit being modified is available from SCDHEC.

A public meeting will be held on Thursday, January 11, 2000, 3 p.m. at the Aiken County Public Library. Representatives from SRS will be available to answer questions on the modifications. Written comments may be sent to SCDHEC. All comments will be considered in the final decision. For additional information, contact Jim Moore, Westinghouse Savannah River Company, Savannah River Site, 742-A, Aiken, SC 29808. Please send your comments to J. T. Litton, Director, Division of Waste Management, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201-1708.

Part B Permit Renewal Application Public Meeting

Thursday, January 11, 3 p.m.

Aiken County Public Library
314 Chesterfield Street
Aiken, SC

Discussion draft expected in mid-December

Draft SRS Comprehensive Plan soon to be released

The *SRS Long Range Comprehensive Plan Discussion Draft* is scheduled to be released in mid-December 2000. This plan integrates the SRS mission and vision with ecological, economic, cultural, and social factors in a regional context and provides a framework for effective decision-making for near-term and long-term uses of the site.

The *SRS Long Range Comprehensive Plan Discussion Draft* includes proposed reconfiguration actions that will prepare SRS to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Changes in the physical layout of the site are described that should improve efficiency and security.

The site's strategic plan, *21st Century Stewards for the Nation: A Strategic Plan for 2000 and Beyond*, provides the basis for the development of all planning documents at SRS. The *SRS Long Range Comprehensive*

Plan Discussion Draft provides the next level of detail to support and promote the integration of site mission plans. This plan describes the site's current situation, defines a vision for the evolution of the site over the next 50 years, outlines actions to achieve the vision, and guides the allocation of resources toward attainment of that vision. This plan provides a framework within which detailed analyses will be conducted to determine the courses of action required to reach optimum site configuration.

The plan will be available in late December through the site's web site (www.srs.gov), electronically on compact disk, and in hard copy. To receive a copy of this plan, please contact Jim Moore at 1-800-249-8155 or by sending an email to jim02.moore@srs.gov.

FONSI issued for HEU Blend-Down Facilities

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on November 3, 2000, for the Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-1322) prepared for the proposed highly enriched uranium (HEU) blend-down facilities at SRS. The EA evaluated the potential for significant impacts associated with the proposed construction and operation of a low enriched uranium (LEU) loading station and modifications to the existing HEU blend-down facilities, SRS Central Analytical Laboratory (CLAB), and K-Area facilities.

The proposed action would support the ongoing disposition of surplus HEU, a weapons-usable fissile material, within the DOE complex. Blending the HEU down to LEU with materials low in Uranium-235 eliminates the risk of diversion for nuclear proliferation purposes and enhances the beneficial recovery of the commercial fuel value of the resulting LEU. This isotopic blending process can be performed by blending HEU with natural uranium.

Once HEU is blended down to LEU, it is no more weapons-usable than existing, abundant supplies of LEU. DOE proposes to construct and operate the LEU loading station and implement the changes to the existing HEU blend-down facilities, CLAB, and K-Area facilities necessary to support the operation of the pro-

posed station. This action would enable SRS to ship the blended-down LEU offsite for further processing, thereby eliminating the onsite inventory and the weapons-usability of this material. The conversion and transportation of the LEU solution were already addressed in broad terms in the final environmental impact statement (EIS) on the disposition of surplus HEU (DOE/EIS-0240).

DOE, after a review of the EA, has determined that the proposed action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and, as a result of this determination, the preparation of an EIS is not required. Therefore, DOE has issued the FONSI.

If you wish to request a copy of the final EA and FONSI, please contact:

Andrew R. Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer
U. S. Department of Energy
Savannah River Operations Office
Building 742-A, Room 185, Aiken, SC 29808
e-mail: nepa@srs.gov
Fax/telephone: 1-800-881-7292

Public meeting to discuss SRS work-related illnesses

Dr. David Michaels, Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environment, Safety and Health (EH-1) will host a public meeting to hear and discuss work-related illnesses of current, former and retired workers of the Savannah River Site or those who have worked at other DOE complex facilities and their families. Dr. Michaels will also discuss the new Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program recently signed by President Clinton.

The public meeting will be held in Aiken Technical College's Learning Resource Center amphitheater, on Thursday, December 7 at 7 p.m. Aiken Technical College is on U.S. Highway 1/78 ap-

proximately 5 miles west of downtown Aiken, South Carolina, and 7 miles east of downtown Augusta, Georgia.

Former DOE employees or their families who can not attend the meeting but have concerns or information can call a confidential toll-free hotline, 1-877-447-9756 weekday between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. EST.

For further information on the meeting, please contact Bill Taylor of the DOE Office of External Affairs at 803-725-2889 or 800-249-8155, or Jeff Eagan at the Department's Washington Headquarters at 202-586-4598.

SRS CAB adopts three recommendations at its November meeting in North Augusta, SC

Recommendation 132 Release of Radioactive Scrap Metal

The SRS CAB recommended that DOE-HQ abandon any plans to pursue a dedicated steel mill to recycle metals in the DOE complex and instead utilize its time and resources to work aggressively with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to establish national release standards for volumetrically contaminated metals.

The CAB also asked DOE-SR to develop and certify a program for the control and release of personal property that meets the revised DOE Order 5400.5 and includes a public participation program.

Recommendation 133 Consolidated Incineration Facility RCRA Part B Permit Modification

The CAB recommended that the SCDHEC CIF permit modification recognize the need for adequate time for the full development, implementation and operation of an alternative treatment technology before CIF closes.

Recommendation 134 Water Quality Standards 2000 Revisions

The SRS CAB recommended that the Water Classification and Standards Regulation 61-68 remain the same for the hardness value until an environmental gain can be demonstrated to justify the economic expense.

SRS CAB to form a new subcommittee

The Strategic & Long Term Issues Committee announces the formation of the Long Term Stewardship Subcommittee, which will monitor SRS stewardship initiatives and provide recommendations to the SRS Citizens Advisory Board regarding stewardship.

This subcommittee will be led by P.K. Smith. The subcommittee is planning to hold an organizational meeting on January 9 to determine its charter and scope of work.

Participation on the Long Term Stewardship Subcommittee is open to all interested parties.

If you are interested in participating, contact Jim Moore at 725-5663 or 1-800-249-8155.

Current NEPA actions affecting SRS

- **Construction and Operation of the Highly Enriched Uranium Blend-Down Facilities at the Savannah River Site (DOE/EA-1322)**, The EA analyzed the potential environmental consequences associated with construction and operation of a low enriched uranium (LEU) loading station and modifications to existing facilities at SRS. The proposed action would support delivery of LEU (converted from off-specification highly enriched uranium) to the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued on November 3, 2000.
- **Offsite Transportation of Certain Low-Level and Mixed Radioactive Waste from SRS for Treatment and Disposal at Commercial and Government Facilities (DOE/EA-1308)**, The EA analyzed the potential environmental consequences associated with transporting low-level and mixed low-level waste to offsite commercial and government facilities for treatment and/or final disposal. These facilities are variously located in the Idaho, Nevada, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Washington. The draft EA was distributed on September 13 for public comment. The EA is currently being revised due to numerous public comments.
- **Evaluate an Alternative Approach for the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) Glass Waste Canister Storage Facility at SRS (DOE/EA-1327)**, The EA analyzed potential environmental consequences associated with building and operating an onsite above-ground concrete pad for casks containing DWPF canisters. The storage casks would be made using SRS's inventory of depleted uranium trioxide powder. The EA was completed in March, however, the contracting strategy is now being re-evaluated. When the proposed action is reformulated, the EA will be revised accordingly. The schedule is uncertain.
- **SRS High Level Waste Tank Closure (DOE/EIS-0303)**, The proposed action is to close the SRS HLW Tanks in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, DOE Orders and SCDHEC permit requirements. The draft EIS is now available for public comment through January 23, 2001. Please see the article on page 1.
- **SRS Salt Disposition Alternative SEIS (DOE/EIS-0082-S2)**, The proposed action is to construct and operate a process to replace In-Tank Precipitation as part of the SRS High Level Waste Management System. The draft EIS is expected in early 2001.

EIS - Environmental Impact Statement

SEIS - Supplemental Impact Statement

EA - Environmental Assessment

FONSI - Finding of No Significant Impact

ROD - Record of Decision

Public meeting set for December 7

DOE makes modification request dealing with groundwater standards at the MWMF

DOE-Savannah River Operations Office has requested from SCDHEC modifications to SRS's 1992 and 2000 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Part B Permit Renewal Applications for Volume VII, which details operations at the site's Mixed Waste Management Facility (MWMF)

This revision (Rev. 1 of the 2000 Part B Permit Renewal Application and Rev. 7 of the 1992 Part B Permit Renewal Application) deals with groundwater protection standards for the northwest and southeast plumes at the MWMF.

This notice begins a 60-day comment period. More information, including the actual permit applications, is available for review and copying at the US DOE Public Reading Room located in the University of South Carolina-Aiken library, or by contacting personnel listed below. The permittees compliance history during the life of the permits being modified is available from the Agency contact person.

A public meeting will be held Thursday, December 7 at 3 p.m. at the Aiken County Public Library. Representatives from SRS will be available to an-

For more information contact:

Jim Moore
Westinghouse Savannah River Company
Savannah River Site
742-A
Aiken, SC 29808
(803) 725-5663
e-mail: jim02.moore@srs.gov

Send your comments to

J.T. Litton, Director
Division of Waste Management
Bureau of Land and Waste
Management
SC Department of Health and
Environmental Control
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201-1708

swer questions. Written comments may be sent to SCDHEC. All comments will be considered in the final decision.

DOE requests authorization to demonstrate base injection technology

DOE-SR has requested from the SCDHEC a temporary authorization request to demonstrate the base injection technology at the F Area.

The modification includes temporary in-situ pilot testing of the base injection technology. Chemicals will be injected to raise the pH of the groundwater to its natural pH, thus reducing the mobility of the contaminant metals.

For more information contact:
Jim Moore
Westinghouse Savannah River Company
Savannah River Site, 742-A
Aiken, SC 29808
(803) 725-5663
e-mail: jim02.moore@srs.gov

SRS Citizens Advisory Board 2001

Meeting Schedule

Date**Meeting/Location****January 22-23****Quarterly Board Meeting**

Hilton Oceanfront-Palmetto Dunes
23 Ocean Lane, Hilton Head Island, S.C. 29928
(843) 842-8000

February 27**Combined Committees**

Holiday Inn West
1075 Stevens Creek Road, Augusta, Ga.30907
(706) 738-8811

April 23-24**Quarterly Board Meeting**

North Augusta Community Center
101 Brookside Drive, North Augusta, S.C. 29841
(803) 441-4290

May 22**Combined Committees**

Hilton Savannah DeSoto
15 East Liberty Street, Savannah, Ga. 31412
(912) 232-9000

July 23-24**Quarterly Board Meeting**

Holiday Inn, Coliseum at USC
630 Assemble Street, Columbia, S.C. 29201
(803) 799-7800

August 28**Combined Committees**

SC Advanced Technology Park at Snelling
784 Oxborne Road, Barnwell, S.C. 29812
(803) 541-3322

October 22-23**Quarterly Board Meeting**

Sheraton Augusta Hotel
2651 Perimeter Prkwy, Augusta, Ga. 30909
(706) 855-8100

November 13**Combined Committees**

Embassy Suites
5055 International Blvd., N Charleston, 29418
(843) 747-1882

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For more information on this or other
environmental and compliance activities
at SRS, please contact:

Jim Moore

WSRC

Aiken, S.C. 29808

(800) 249-8155

e-mail: jim02.moore@srs.gov

Donna K. Martin

WSRC

Public Involvement

(803) 725-7169

Access the Environmental Notice web site:
[http://www.SRS.GOV/general/srenviro/
envbul/ebinex.htm](http://www.SRS.GOV/general/srenviro/envbul/ebinex.htm)
