



Environmental Bulletin

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from the Savannah River Site

Remedial action for Old Solvent Tanks available for public review/comment

The Department of Energy (DOE) will release a Statement of Basis/Interim Action Proposed Plan on April 4, 2001, describing the proposed interim remedial action for the Old Solvent Tanks at the Old Radioactive Waste Burial Ground at the Savannah River Site (SRS). The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) will also release a draft Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) permit modification for the proposed remedial action for this unit.

The plan and draft permit modification will be available for public review and copying at the locations listed on page 2. The public comment period is scheduled for April 4, 2001 to May 18, 2001. These documents were completed to meet the terms of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and RCRA laws governing the investigation and cleanup of waste units. DOE has worked with the Environmental Protection Agency-Region IV (EPA) and SCDHEC to ensure the remedial approach is consistent with all applicable environmental requirements.

Public information and public involvement activities will be conducted throughout the various phases of the cleanup process. Public comment periods are held to receive oral and written comments from the public on proposed remedial plans and actions. In addition, as required by RCRA/CERCLA, the opportunity for public meetings, hearings, and briefings are made available during the remedial process as requested by the public.

The Old Solvent Tanks (OSTs) are comprised of 22 underground storage tanks located in the Old Radioactive Waste Burial Ground (ORWBG). These tanks were used to contain low-level radioactive spent solvent waste generated from a chemical process in the separations facilities at SRS. The tanks were installed at various dates from 1955 to 1968. All 22 tanks were constructed of thin-walled (approximately 0.75-inch) milled steel. Each tank is equipped with one or two riser/vent pipes. The tanks have different sizes and capacities. The tanks were placed underground in a horizontal position. The depths to the top of the tanks range from 6 inches

to 7 feet 4 inches. Most of the tanks are inclined to some extent; several are inclined more than 6 inches. The liquid waste in the tanks was removed, to the extent practicable, into new, double-walled, corrosion-resistant tanks in the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Facility (643-E) by January 1981. No additional waste was placed in the OSTs after this date.

DOE, EPA, and SCDHEC have reviewed the risks associated with the Old Solvent Tanks (OSTs) and are recommending the following interim action: the solvent tanks will remain in place and all 22 tanks will be completely filled with grout. Grouting is selected as the preferred alternative. This alternative poses the lowest risk to the workers who will be implementing the remedy; is sufficiently permanent to prevent long-term collapse of the tanks; provides some reduction in leachability; presents the fewest implementability concerns; and is the lowest cost option that still meets the Remedial Action Objectives (RAOs). Grouting will meet the RAOs by preventing collapse of the tanks, limiting exposure to tank contents, and reducing the threat of release of contamination from the tanks into the soil. This response also satisfies the RAO to minimize risk to workers. The risk to worker exposure is relatively low compared to other more intrusive response actions (such as treatment/removal). In addition, the resulting solid mass will reduce the possibility of intrusion.

The interim action is proposed to provide stability to the tanks thereby reducing the potential risks to the on-unit worker and the environment pending completion of the overall unit remediation strategy in the ORWBG. Comments on the Statement of Basis/Interim Action Proposed Plan are requested by May 18, 2001. Upon completion of the public comment period, a Responsiveness Summary that addresses public comments will be prepared. The Responsiveness Summary will be made available with the Interim Record of Decision and will be sent to each person who submits comments. See page 2 for information repository locations and contacts for more information.

DOE proposes remedial approach for Ford Building Seepage Basin at SRS

The Department of Energy (DOE) will release a Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan on April 6, 2001, describing the proposed remedial approach for the Ford Building Seepage Basin Operable Unit at the Savannah River Site (SRS). The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) will also release a draft Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) permit modification for the proposed remedial action for this unit. These documents will be available for public review and copying at the locations listed in the adjacent column. The public comment period is scheduled for April 6, 2001, to May 20, 2001.

DOE, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and SCDHEC have reviewed the risks associated with this unit and have evaluated cleanup alternatives. The three agencies are recommending the following action for the Ford Building Seepage Basin:

The contaminated soil at the Tank/Process Sewer Line Area will be excavated and the soil will be dispositioned into the seepage basin. The remaining volume of the seepage basin and excavated area of the Tank/Process Sewer Line Area will be backfilled with clean soil from an SRS borrow pit. The backfilled areas will be covered with vegetative covers, and institutional controls will be used.

This alternative will be protective of human health and the environment. It is also intended to be the final action for the Ford Building Seepage Basin.

The seepage basin, which is defined by orange balls, is 120 by 78 feet at ground level, approximately 60 by 25 feet at the floor level, and approximately 10 feet deep. The basin is fenced and marked with signs identifying it as a RCRA/Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) unit. Waste disposal records indicate that the basin received approximately 380,400 gallons of wastewater from 1964 to 1984. During this period, the dominant radionuclide released was tritium with lesser amounts of cobalt-60, strontium-90, cesium-137, and unidentified alpha emitters. In addition to radionuclides, trace amounts of nonradioactive surfactants, and organic and inorganic constituents may have been released into the basin. There is no record that the basin ever overflowed.

Comments on the Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan and the draft RCRA permit modification are requested by May 20, 2001. Upon completion of the public comment period, a Responsiveness Summary that addresses public comments will be prepared. The Responsiveness Summary will be made available with the Record of Decision and the final RCRA permit decision and will be sent to each person who submits comments.

Copies of the Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan are available in the administrative record, which also contains the RCRA Facility Investigation/Remedial Investigation with Risk Assessment Report for this unit.

Administrative Record Locations

- DOE Public Reading Room at the Gregg-Graniteville Library at the University of South Carolina-Aiken campus in Aiken, SC;
- Thomas Cooper Library Government Documents Department at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC;
- Reese Library at Augusta State University in Augusta, GA; and
- Asa H. Gordon Library at Savannah State University in Savannah, GA.

Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan

The is also available on the Internet in the SRS Home Page under (<http://www.srs.gov>), under "Happening Now," (<http://www.srs.gov/general/srs-home.htm>) and on the SRS Environmental Restoration Home Page, under "Public Involvement," (<http://www.srs.gov/general/srenviro/erd/pub/pubinv.html>).

Draft RCRA Permit Modifications

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Bureau of Land and Waste Management
8901 Farrow Road
Columbia, South Carolina 29203
Phone: (803)896-4000
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SCDHEC
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Organized by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Scoping meetings for MOX facility set

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has announced plans to prepare an environmental impact statement to support its license review of a proposed mixed oxide (MOX) fuel fabrication facility at SRS. The NRC is also scheduling public meetings to allow interested members of the community to express their opinion and provide information and comments to assist with NRC's environmental evaluation.

Scoping meetings will be held April 17, North Augusta Community Center, 496 Brookside Avenue, North Augusta, SC and April 18, Coastal Georgia Center, 305 Martin Luther King Blvd., Savannah, GA. The meetings are scheduled from 7 p.m. until 10 p.m. NRC staff will be available at 5:30 p.m. to informally discuss the project. Those interested in attending are asked to register in advance by calling Betty Garrett, 301-415-5808 (e-mail: bsg@nrc.gov).

These meetings will enable the public to become involved in determining the scope, or bounds of the environmental impact statement for the proposed MOX facility. The meetings will follow a non-traditional format, with attendees participating in smaller working groups within the larger meeting setting. Participants may express their views verbally and will also be encouraged to submit their comments in writing. Additional meetings inviting public comment will be held after the draft statement is published.

DOE plans to construct a MOX fuel plant through a contract with the consortium of Duke Engineering & Services,

COGEMA Inc., and Stone & Webster (known as DCS). If NRC grants the license, DCS could build and operate a MOX facility that would convert surplus weapons-grade plutonium, supplied by the Department of Energy, into fuel for use in commercial nuclear reactors. Such use would render the plutonium essentially inaccessible and unattractive for weapons use. Commercial nuclear power plants in the United States currently use uranium as fuel; the mixed oxide fuel would be a combination of uranium and plutonium.

DCS submitted an application on March 1 for authorization to construct the facility. An opportunity for a hearing will be announced in a *Federal Register* notice following NRC's acceptance review of the application. The NRC's preparation of an environmental impact statement is a major part of the construction application review.

The MOX fuel fabrication facility would have to be built in accordance with strict safety requirements set forth in the agency's regulations. If the NRC review proceeds on schedule, and if the agency approves construction, DCS intends to begin construction in mid-2002. DCS also intends to submit an application for an operating license in June 2002.

The public meetings in April will assist the NRC staff in determining the range of environmental impacts and alternative actions to be considered in the environmental impact statement, and will identify significant issues.

MOX construction application available

The Mixed Oxide (MOX) Construction Application is now available on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) MOX website at <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/NMSS/MOX/index.html>

Also, the MOX Construction Application is now available from the Public Document Room (PDR) on CD-ROM. The CD-ROM contains all of the non-proprietary information available to the public on ADAMS (including the drawings that are NOT currently available on the web— however, plans are being made to include them). It is a 2 CD set. The cost is \$22 per CD, or \$44 for the set plus shipping. The PDR will accept credit cards such as Visa, Mastercard, and Discover. Turnaround time is 24 hours during business days.

The PDR announces new documents, such as the MOX CAR on its announcement area at www.nrc.gov/NRC/PDR/pdrdoc.html. The PDR phone number is (800) 397-4209, fax (301) 415-3548 and email at pdr@nrc.gov. Telephone hours are 8:30am - 4:15pm EST M-F, closed on Federal Holidays.

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The SRS Environmental Bulletin

For more information on this or other
environmental and compliance activities at
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e-mail: jim02.moore@srs.gov

Donna K. Martin

Westinghouse Savannah
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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)

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