



Environmental Bulletin

Volume 14, Number 18
August 6, 2003

from the Savannah River Site

Amended Record Of Decision Issued for Disposing of Select Group of SRS Materials As Waste

The Department of Energy (DOE) announced, in an amended record of decision (ROD), plans to dispose of certain materials, including cobalt-60 and thulium-170, as waste. The amended ROD appeared in the Federal Register on July 28, 2003, and compares the materials and their proposed disposal to the materials and disposal technologies evaluated in the Savannah River Site (SRS) Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (DOE/EIS-0217) and the Interim Management of Nuclear Materials EIS (DOE/EIS-0220).

This decision allows for the disposal of cobalt-60 and thulium-170 slugs as well as slugs and assemblies of other materials. A slug is generally a short cylinder, approximately 12 - 18 inches long by three to four inches in diameter, of fuel, target, or barrier material in the form of pellets, pins, or solid metal that is assembled with other slugs in a tube for insertion in a nuclear reactor as a single rod or combined with others to form an assembly.

Acknowledging that there is no programmatic need for the materials covered by this decision, DOE proposes to expedite the disposition of these materials that are suitable for direct disposal as waste. This approach is in keeping with DOE's clean-up strategy to accelerate the reduction of risk. By utilizing direct disposal when feasible, DOE will stabilize only those materials that require such processing in the SRS canyon facilities. This strategy will also allow DOE to reduce costs associated with managing these materials.

DOE will only dispose of these materials once it has been established that they meet the applicable waste criteria. In order to qualify for direct disposal the materials must meet the definition of low-level radioactive waste (LLW) or transuranic (TRU) waste. Because stabilization activities result in the generation of additional waste, this decision will decrease the amount of LLW, and the amount of TRU waste, to be managed at SRS as compared to the amounts that would have been generated under DOE's previous decisions.

The materials covered by this decision are currently stored in various SRS facilities. The materials in this category that are

determined to qualify for direct disposal as LLW will be buried in a shielded container or containers at SRS or at an offsite facility to ensure that radiation exposure is kept as low as reasonably achievable.

For further information contact: Andrew R. Grainger, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance Officer, U.S. Department of Energy, Savannah River Operations Office, Building 730B, Room 2418, Aiken, South Carolina 29802, (800) 881-7292, E-mail NEPA@srs.gov.

Hazardous Waste Permit Modifications Requested

The United States Department of Energy-Savannah River (DOE-SR) Operations Office has requested from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) modifications to the SRS 1992 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Part B Permit Renewal Application for Volumes III and V. These modifications detail changes to the M- and H-Area Hazardous Waste Management Facilities (HWMFs), respectively.

The revision (Rev 18 of Volume III) discusses the installation and operation of seven soil vapor extraction (SVE) wells in the Trenches Area of the A-Area Miscellaneous Rubble Pile Operable Unit, a RCRA /Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act unit, to remediate trichloroethylene and tetrachloroethylene. These wells will be connected to the RCRA permitted 782-3MSVE Unit.

The revision (Rev 20 of Volume V) proposes to change the frequency of post-closure care inspections at the H-Area HWMF from monthly to quarterly.

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.

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Current NEPA Actions Affecting SRS

• **Disposition of Scrap Metals Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) (DOE/EIS-0327)** This PEIS will evaluate alternatives for disposition of scrap metals from DOE sites that may have been in radiological areas. The disposition options to be analyzed include continuation of the suspension on unrestricted release of metals for recycling, unrestricted release of scrap metals for recycling, and disposal. The Notice of Intent (NOI) for this PEIS was issued on July 12, 2001. A public scoping meeting was held on July 31, 2001, in North Augusta, SC. The draft and final PEIS schedule is uncertain.

• **Supplemental PEIS on Stockpile Stewardship and Management for a Modern Pit Facility (DOE/EIS-0236-S2)** This PEIS will evaluate alternative sites (Los Alamos National Laboratory, Nevada Test Site, Pantex Plant, Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, and Savannah River Site) for a Modern Pit Facility, to provide the capability to manufacture plutonium pits for the United States nuclear weapons stockpile. This PEIS will be followed by a site-specific EIS to address the impacts of construction and operation of the Modern Pit Facility at the selected site. The NOI for this PEIS was issued on September 23, 2002. A local public scoping meeting was held on October 29, 2002, in North Augusta, SC. The final PEIS is projected for March 2004, and the record of decision (ROD) is scheduled for April 2004. Interested parties may view the draft PEIS at <http://www.mpfeis.com>. Information regarding the draft PEIS can be found in 68 FR 33487, dated June 4, 2003.

• **Amended Record of Decision (ROD) for the Interim Management of Nuclear Materials (DOE/EIS-0220)** DOE proposes to dispose of certain materials, including cobalt-60 and thulium-170, as waste. The amended ROD compares the materials and the proposed disposal of the materials, to the materials and disposal technologies evaluated in the SRS Waste Management EIS (DOE/EIS-0217) and the Interim Management of Nuclear Materials EIS (DOE/EIS-0220). The amended ROD appeared in the Federal Register on July 28, 2003, (68 FR 44329) and updates regarding this NEPA action will not appear here in the future. (See related article on page 1)

• **West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) Draft Waste Management EIS (DOE/EIS-0337D)** DOE's proposed action (and preferred alternative) is to ship radioactive wastes that are either currently in storage on the

WVDP site, or that will be generated from WVDP operations over the next ten years, to offsite disposal locations, and to continue managing its onsite waste storage tanks. The potential environmental consequences of the proposed action are evaluated in the draft EIS, including impacts to workers and the public from waste transportation and waste management. The draft EIS also analyzes a No Action Alternative, under which most wastes would continue to be stored over the next ten years, and an alternative under which certain wastes would be shipped to interim offsite storage locations including SRS prior to disposal, along with the addition of retrievable grout to the WVDP waste storage tanks for interim stabilization. Indefinite waste storage onsite was considered but not analyzed. The draft PEIS can be viewed at <http://tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa/docs/deis/eis0337D/TOCindex.html>. The final EIS is scheduled to be available during November 2003. (See related Recommendation 169 on page 3)

• **Natural Resources Management Activities at SRS (DOE/EA-0826)** DOE prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in 1993 to analyze the potential environmental impacts of continued management of SRS natural resources. Based on the analyses in the EA, DOE determined the proposed action was not a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment within the meaning of NEPA, and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). In 2000, DOE issued a revised FONSI that determined implementation of a revised red-cockaded woodpecker Management Plan would have impacts no greater than those described in the 1993 EA. DOE now proposes a second revised FONSI which will address minor differences between the 1991 Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP) and the next issue of this plan. The NEPA review is on hold until the next NRMP is finalized.

Want more Information on SRS NEPA Issues?

For more information on any SRS NEPA issue
call the SRS NEPA Hotline at 1-800-881-7292
or E-mail at NEPA@srs.gov

SRS CAB Makes Recommendations

The SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) met July 21-22 at the Adams Mark in Columbia, SC. The following recommendations were adopted following in-depth presentations and discussions.

Recommendation 165 - SRS National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) The SRS CAB recommends DOE work with SCDHEC to gain a minimum 3-year period and maximum 5-year period for monitoring designated outfalls that may be affected by the new limit prescribed under the revised NPDES permit. It also requests that SRS provide a schedule for a developing a cost-benefit analysis which demonstrates water quality impacts versus the cost to achieve compliance. The recommendation also addresses the need for DOE to work with SCDHEC to develop a more reasonable approach to regulating discharges into ephemeral streams such as site specific standards. Progress reports to the Board are requested by September 22, 2003.

Recommendation 166 - Historic Preservation at SRS The Board asks SRS and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to expand public involvement by holding public workshops and/or educational information meetings where input from the public and former SRS workers is collected and the appropriate information on important artifacts and historic facilities is included in the historic preservation Programmatic Agreement (PA). It also asks SRS to submit a draft PA for stakeholder review prior to finalizing the agreement with SHPO.

Recommendation 167 - Deactivation & Decommissioning (D&D) Plan In support of the Environmental Management Integrated Deactivation and Decommissioning Plan, the SRS CAB recommends that DOE ensures the D&D Program is focused on risk reduction and mitigation, not merely on reduction of the site "footprint". The recommendation also addresses the Board's concern that SRS should concentrate efforts to remove all principal sources of hazards (source terms) as the first part of the D&D activities and incorporate this concept in the next Plan revision. The Board also asks SRS to continue to press for funds to implement the program per the timeline in the Integrated D&D Plan.

Recommendation 168 - R Reactor Seepage Basin The SRS CAB supports the R-Reactor Seepage Basis Proposed Plans and the preferred alternatives including the use of mixing zones, where applicable for remedial actions. The SRS CAB recommends DOE work with SCDHEC to avoid any costly and ineffective remedial system, such as pump and

treat and re-inject, for contaminated groundwater in the R-Reactor Seepage Basins area.

Recommendation 169 - Draft West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) Waste Management EIS Upon review of the draft EIS, the SRS CAB asks that as precursors to the receipt of this waste, SRS ensure adequate TRU waste storage and funding be made available to handle the additional costs. A second glass waste canister storage building should be operational prior to receipt of such waste. The Board also asks SRS to place the high activity TRU waste on a priority disposal schedule with the appropriate certified and licensed shipping containers. Further, the Board recommends that for every volume of WVDP TRU waste received by SRS, a shipment of high activity SRS TRU waste equal to twice the receiving volume be shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP). It is also recommended that waste shipped to SRS for temporary storage is packaged according to WIPP Waste Acceptance Criteria without the need for additional processing.

The recommendations were formally transmitted to DOE, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as appropriate. For a copy of these recommendations, contact Dawn Haygood at 1-800-249-8155 or E-mail at dawn.haygood@srs.gov.

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Hazardous Waste Permit

A public meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 27, 2003, 3:00 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.

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. For additional information, contact Jim Moore, Westinghouse Savannah River Company, Savannah River Site, 742-A, Aiken, SC 29808. Mr. Moore may also be reached by calling 1-800-249-8155 or E-mail at jim02.moore@srs.gov.

Mark Your Calendar

Wednesday, August 27, 2003

3:00 p.m.

Aiken County Public Library

SRS Representatives will be available to answer questions on this permit request

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Savannah River Site
Building 742-A
Aiken, S.C. 29808



The SRS Environmental Bulletin

For more information on this or other
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at SRS, please contact:

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Public Involvement

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