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SRS Receives Regulatory Concurrence on Second Waste Tank Milestone This Year

AIKEN, S.C. (November 18, 2024) – The [U.S. Department of Energy](#) (DOE) [Office of Environmental Management](#) received concurrence from the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that the [Savannah River Site](#) (SRS) has successfully removed waste from Tank 9 and may now proceed to the next step in the closure process for that tank.

Completing this phase of work on the waste tank, called preliminary cease waste removal (PCWR), is the second waste-tank-related Federal Facility Agreement (FFA) milestone completed by SRS [liquid waste](#) contractor Savannah River Mission Completion (SRMC) this year. The first PCWR milestone was [achieved for Tank 10 in May](#), seven months ahead of the agreed-upon December 2024 deadline.

PCWR for Tank 9 was accomplished more than a year ahead of the December 2025 deadline.

PCWR is a regulatory milestone for old-style tanks that designates agreement between DOE, SCDES, and EPA that, based on preliminary information, there is reasonable assurance that performance objectives for tank closure will be met. Also, the concurrence means that work can begin on the sampling and analysis phase of the tank closure process. This next phase will verify these conclusions, based on laboratory analysis of any remaining material and final residual volume determination, prior to stabilization and final isolation of the [waste tank](#).

The FFA establishes a procedural framework, including liquid waste-tank milestone agreements and other site cleanup priorities. It also specifically outlines the schedule for the waste removal and operational closure of the remaining 16 oldest-style tanks at SRS. Eight of the 51 tanks at SRS have already been operationally closed. All 43 remaining waste tanks are slated to be operationally closed by 2037.

Jim Folk, DOE-Savannah River assistant manager for waste disposition, said PCWR continues to be a significant step toward achieving tank closure.

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“Completing waste-tank closure milestones ahead of schedule is of exceptional interest to our regulators, our stakeholders and our communities,” Folk said. “The environmental management work that the Department of Energy is completing at the Savannah River Site, such as preliminary cease waste removal, is benefitting our workers and the public alike.”

Tank 9 was also the first tank to [have a drone used in the annulus inspection process](#). The tank’s annulus provides secondary containment and protection for these tanks in the event of a leak. Before drones, wall-crawling robots were used for the inspections. The drones provide more flexibility and capability, as the aircraft can cover more area than a magnetic crawler — and do so more quickly.

SRMC Chief Operations Officer Wyatt Clark said PCWR efforts at SRS continue to be a huge success.

“Most importantly, the team has been safe while completing a tremendous task in our mission to safely dispose of radioactive waste, demonstrating our effort to accomplishing another FFA commitment, and ultimately, completing the SRS liquid waste mission by 2037,” Clark said.

Tank 9 is an underground storage tank placed into service in 1955. It is 75 feet in diameter and stands 24.5 feet tall and has a capacity of 750,000 gallons.



Jim Rush, H Area Waste Retrieval and Tank Closure manager for Savannah River Mission Completion, ceremoniously places a medallion commemorating the preliminary cease waste removal milestone for Tank 9 in the Savannah River Site’s H Tank Farm. This milestone marked concurrence from state and federal regulators to suspend waste removal activities in Tank 9 and move to the next step in the closure process, accomplishing a Federal Facility Agreement milestone. Pictured with Rush are some members of the Tank 9 closure team representing construction, operations, facility integration, radiological control, design authority engineering, project management and senior leadership.