



May 1996 Meeting Minutes

SRS Citizen's Advisory Board

May 14, 1996 8:30 a.m.

Hyatt Regency Hotel

Savannah, Ga.

Members Present

Members present included Arthur Belge, Ann Brown, Aundrial Cheever, Tom Costikyan, Bill Donaldson, Brendolyn Jenkins, Bill Lawless, Ann Loadholt, Suzanne Matthews, Kathryn May, Mildred McClain, JoAnn Nestor, Karen Patterson, Kamalakar Raut, Deborah Simone, Bob Slay, Ed Tant and Beaurine Wilkins. Ex-Officio representatives present included Tom Heenan, Charlie Anderson, Ann Ragan, Jim Brownlow, Camilla Warren and Jeff Crane.

Members absent were Thelonious Jones, Larry McKinney, Lane Parker, Andrew Rea, P.K. Smith and Vernon Zinnerman. Board Facilitator Walt Joseph was not present. Currently, there is one Board vacancy. The Department of Energy (DOE) Designated Federal Official present was Tom Heenan.

This meeting was open to the public and posted in the Federal Register in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). New Board members were introduced and provided the opportunity to explain why they were interested in serving on the Board.

Key Decisions Made by Board

The Board approved recommendations regarding the Storage and Disposition of Weapons-Usable Fissile Materials Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS).

The Board endorsed the preferred remedial alternative for the Old F-Area Seepage Basin, which recommends that basin top soils and ditchline soils be grouted and capped and access to the area controlled. It also recommends that basin vegetation be disposed in the SRS burial grounds and that cleanup of contaminated basin groundwater be subject to alternative concentration and mixing zone limits according to the State of South Carolina.

The Board approved a recommendation to assess the feasibility of using high-level waste tanks to dispose of contaminated soils from environmentally remediated surface units. The recommendation also requests an evaluation of the Environmental Restoration (ER) Program so that waste sites with the highest risks can be remediated first. It was requested that both of the above items be included in the strategy section of the SRS ER Management Action Plan.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March Board meeting were approved with no changes.

Agency Updates

Tom Heenan of DOE announced that Thomas Grumbly had been sworn in as the Under Secretary of the Department of Energy on May 6 and announced the appointment of Alvin Alm as Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management. (See attached news releases.) Mr. Heenan also announced that the comment period for the Plutonium Disposition Environmental Impact Statement was extended to June 7, 1996. He provided a news release regarding the record of decision for spent nuclear fuel receipt and disposition (see attached) and announced an upcoming ceremony to celebrate the Defense Waste Processing Facility operations. Mr. Heenan also briefly discussed the site's Environmental Restoration program, which saw hundreds of acres closed in the past year, and provided several news articles regarding the program (see attached).

Camilla Warren of the Environmental Protection Agency announced that the final report from the Federal Facilities Environmental Restoration Dialogue Committee was available and would be provided to all Board members. She also announced that EPA would be working with SRS to sponsor outreach meetings in the next six months.

Ann Ragan of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) announced the extension of a fish advisory, which originally notified individuals that fish from the Savannah River between Lake Thurmond and Beech Island may be a potential source for mercury. The fish advisory was expanded to include two radionuclides, Strontium-90 and Cesium-137 and the area of river was expanded from Beech Island to the Allendale/Barnwell County Line to Webb Wildlife to Interstate 95.

Keith Collinsworth of SCDHEC stated that air emissions have caused mercury to accumulate in fish over time but that one particular industry has not been pinpointed for this contamination. Ann Ragan stated that elevated levels have not been detected in lower parts of the state and that SCDHEC was expanding their studies and testing. She provided a news release and questions and answers regarding the fish advisory (see attached). She stated that the Savannah River water is safe and potential hazards exist only for those individuals that eat a great deal of fish each month. She stated that this is a communication issue and asked that Board members provide comments on how to communicate the fish advisory to their communities.

Public Comments

George Minot, Hilton Head Island, S.C. resident

Mr. Minot stated he was pleased to see a scope of work for technical assistance released by the Board. He also requested that the Board be more sensitive to hosting meetings around the state. Mr. Minot stated he did have a few comments regarding the Board's Nuclear Materials Management Subcommittee motion, however after reading Mr. Brian Costner's comments, felt

they were covered. He added that the choice of a mixed oxide reactor would create a lot of jobs at SRS, but that there are problems with putting fuel into such a reactor. He stated that the cost factor of this option is high and encouraged the Board to think hard and fast about whether options are cost effective.

Dave Christensen, Augusta, Ga. resident

Mr. Christensen proposed that the CAB be advocates of its ideas and take these ideas forward to general legislators. He stated that generally, legislators do not understand Board documents and resolutions and the Board may want to consider taking story boards to the offices of Congressman and speak with them directly. Mr. Christensen also provided these comments at the Monday evening public meeting.

Nuclear Materials Management Subcommittee Report

Subcommittee Chair Tom Costikyan discussed the Storage and Disposition of Weapons-Usable Fissile Materials Draft PEIS, commonly referred to as the Plutonium Disposition PEIS. He stated that in summary, this PEIS asked the question "What do we do with all of the excess weapons-grade plutonium in the United States?" Mr. Costikyan explained that plutonium is a metal that does not occur naturally. He explained that plutonium is radioactive and decays slowly with a half-life of 24,000 years, but that this can be misleading. He said that plutonium is not penetrating, but dangerous if inhaled and therefore must be handled properly. He then discussed the importance of proper handling the need to keep plutonium out of the hands of individuals with bad intentions, who could use this material to build weapons.

Mr. Costikyan discussed the contrast between the policies of other countries and the United States regarding plutonium disposition and the need for a PEIS. He discussed plutonium inventories and presented long-term storage alternatives for excess plutonium. Mr. Costikyan also explained the Spent Fuel Standard, which the PEIS accepts as the desired end result for both vitrification and reactor options. Mr. Costikyan then asked the Board to view a videotape which summarized the PEIS and all options being considered for plutonium disposition.

Following the videotape, Mr. Costikyan read the subcommittee's draft recommendations (see attached). He explained that the subcommittee had obtained the assistance of Dr. Bill Sutcliffe from Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in drafting the proposed recommendations. He also noted comments received from Mr. Brian Costner of the Energy Research Foundation. Following discussion regarding the risk to workers and public health posed in each of the options, accidents, and methods of transportation, Bill Lawless moved the Board accept the subcommittee's draft recommendations. Ann Loadholt seconded the motion. Two minor changes were made following discussion including the removal of "on public roads" in the second sentence of number 3 and the replacement of "as" with "if it is" in the first sentence of number 5. **The Board approved the Nuclear Materials Management Subcommittee's recommendations on the Plutonium Disposition PEIS by a vote of 16 in favor, one opposed and one abstention.**

Reclassification of Upper Three Runs Creek

Sally Knowles of SCDHEC discussed the proposed reclassification of the Upper Three Runs Creek explaining that the request to reclassify was made by Dr. John Morris of Clemson University who discovered over 60 species and two genera new to science and not found anywhere in the world. She explained that reclassification of the Upper Three Runs Creek means that new standards would apply which would limit discharges to the creek. She said stormwater discharges would be allowed; however, wastewater discharges would not. This would ensure the natural conditions of the streams, she said. She stated there had also been overwhelming support provided to include Tinker Creek in the proposed reclassification due to similar species and environment.

Ms. Knowles stated that SCDHEC was seeking additional input regarding reclassification of the creek. She said individuals interested in economic development in Aiken and New Ellenton had provided comments and were against the addition of Tinker Creek to the reclassification proposal. She also stated that SRS does not support reclassification. Ms. Knowles explained that there was no current discharges being made that would have to be stopped due to reclassification; however, the concerns have been expressed that future SRS missions could be impacted by the reclassification. Ms. Knowles invited the Board to attend a public meeting on June 25 regarding the reclassification proposal. The SCDHEC Board will meet July 11 to provide a decision regarding the proposal. If approved, the reclassification proposal would be provided to state legislators.

Environmental Remediation & Waste Management (ER & WM) Subcommittee Report

Subcommittee Co-Chair Bill Lawless read CAB Recommendation No. 15, which called for closure criteria to be developed for high-level waste tanks. He then asked Charlie Anderson of DOE to give an update on the response and implementation of this recommendation. Mr. Anderson explained that DOE, EPA and SCDHEC were working closely to develop the criteria and had provided a joint response to the recommendation (see attached). The Board viewed a brief video on the SRS high-level waste tanks, and Mr. Anderson discussed the development of a closure criteria plan, public involvement in this process and a schedule for the plan's development (see attached slides). He discussed independent reviews of the closure criteria and plans to issue an environmental assessment by this summer and also stated that closure of the first tank is expected by December 1996. Four more tank closures are planned for 1997, he said. Bill Lawless requested that the High Level Waste Tank Closure Plan be reviewed by Joel Massman and the Environmental Advisory Committee.

Bill Lawless next introduced Coleman Miles of Westinghouse Savannah River Company who provided a presentation on the Old F-Area Seepage Basin Operable Unit (see attached slides). Mr. Miles provided background information on the basin, discussed contaminants of concern, the remedial investigation of the unit, and remedial options for soils, vegetation and groundwater. He then discussed the proposed remedial action plan and discuss the preferred alternative for remediation, which recommends that basin top soils and ditchline soils be grouted and capped and access to the area controlled. It also recommends that basin vegetation be disposed in the SRS burial grounds and that cleanup of contaminated basin groundwater be subject to alternative concentration and mixing zone limits according to the State of South Carolina. Bill Lawless then read a draft motion from the subcommittee endorsing this remedial action. Kathryn May moved

the Board accept the subcommittee's recommendation and Beaurine Wilkins seconded the motion. **The Board endorsed the preferred remedial alternative for the Old F-Area Seepage Basin by a vote of 15 in favor and two abstentions.**

Bill Lawless next read a draft recommendation from the subcommittee to utilize retired high-level waste tanks for the disposal of contaminated soil from ER surface units (see attached). The draft motion also asked for an evaluation of the ER program, that those sites with highest risks be remediated first, and that SRS explore ways to shorten the implementation of remediation, especially in the design phase. Suzanne Matthews moved the Board accept the subcommittee's motion and Anne Brown seconded. Following discussion, the word "Utilize" in number 1 was deleted and replaced with "Assess the feasibility of using." There was also a brief discussion regarding the appearance of an inconsistency between the two motions, since the second motion was also based on a review of the Old F Area Seepage Basin, but it was determined that the second motion applied to all ER surface units and would be noted as such in the formal transmittal. **The Board approved the subcommittee's recommendation to assess the feasibility of using high-level waste tanks to dispose of contaminated soils by a vote of 16 in favor and two abstentions.**

Clay Jones of WSRC provided a presentation on the SRS Management Action Plan at the request of the ER&WM Subcommittee. He began by explaining that the plan, referred to as the MAP, is a framework for coordinating and integrating ER activities with SRS operations by identifying and implementing goals and strategies. He discussed how this document is responsive to DOE-Headquarters need for consistent status reporting, responds to CAB's Recommendation No. 10, and connects the overall program with the Federal Facility Agreement Implementation Plan. He further described how Chapter 5 of the MAP incorporates the CAB's request for a comprehensive strategic plan for cleanup of groundwater and surface units.

Mr. Jones discussed the schedule for the MAP, stating that Revision 3 was issued for review on April 1, 1996 and that draft copies were available for public comment. An independent scientific peer review is also planned for the summer, which will be led by Joel Massmann and Adam Babich who conducted the F&H Groundwater ISPR last year in response to a CAB recommendation. The MAP will be re-issued along with the Federal Facility Agreement Implementation Plan by October 1, he said.

The Risk Management & Future Use Subcommittee Report and the Outreach Subcommittee Report were not provided due to absenteeism of the subcommittee chairs.

Subcommittee Participation

Bob Slay requested that all Board members review their subcommittee participation and choose one issues-based subcommittee and one administrative subcommittee to support.

Administrative Items Bob Slay announced that the CAB's self assessment would begin in June.

Handouts

- SRS Citizens Advisory Board Meeting Agenda, May 14, 1996
- DOE News, news releases dated May 6, 1996
- DOE News, news release dated May 13, 1996
- Augusta Chronicle news article dated May 7, 1996
- South Carolina DHEC News Release dated May 14, 1996
- Fish Consumption Advisory for the Savannah River
- "Draft Motion: Nuclear Materials Management Subcommittee", Tom Costikyan
- Letter from Brian Costner, Energy Research Foundation dated May 6, 1996
- Upper Three Runs Reclassification Area map
- South Carolina DHEC Public Hearing notice
- "Savannah River Site High-Level Waste Tank Closure" slides, Charlie Anderson
- "Old F-Area Seepage Basin Operable Unit Proposed Plan Scoping" slides, Coleman Miles
- "SRS CAB ER&WM Subcommittee Motion, Old F- Area Seepage Basin," Bill Lawless
- "SRS CAB ER&WM Subcommittee Motion, Environmental Restoration Program," Bill Lawless
- Letter to Bob Slay from three agencies regarding SRS CAB Recommendation No. 15
- Letter to Bob Slay from SCDHEC regarding Recommendations No. 17 and 19, dated May 13, 1996
- Letter to Bob Slay from EPA regarding Recommendation No. 17, dated May 10, 1996
- CAB Recommendations Summary
- EIS Citizens Advisory Board Monthly Report
- SRS Public Involvement Calendar

Note: Meeting handouts may be obtained by calling the SRS CAB toll free number at 1-800-249-8155.