



## **SRS Citizens Advisory Board**

### **Environmental Remediation and Waste Management Subcommittee**

**Meeting Record  
September 3, 1997**

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The CAB ER&WM subcommittee met on September 3, 1997 at the Savannah Rapids Pavilion in Augusta, GA. CAB members present included CAB ER & WM subcommittee Co-chairs Bill Lawless and Kathryn May and Karen Patterson, and Ken Goad. Todd Crawford, technical consultant to the CAB also attended. Attending from DOE-SR were Virgil Sauls, Gary Little, Virginia Kay, Dale Ormond, Bill Noll and Pam Jenkins. Brent Allen attended from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC). Attending from WSRC/BSRI/BNI were Sonny Goldston, Rick Geddes, Mary Flora, Joe D'Amelio, Craig McMullin, Mike Sujka, Greg Peterson, Peter Hudson, Gerry Stejskal, Mark Dupont, Brent Daugherty, Cliff Thomas, Donna Martin and Anne Roe. Public attendees included Lee Poe, Dorothy Poe, Kent Fortenbury (DNFSB), William R. McDonell, Michael Rorick, William Pitka (Raytheon) and Patricia McCracken. Virginia Kay attended as the Associate Designated Deputy Federal Official (ADDFO). Paul May served as the meeting facilitator. Karen Patterson opened the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

W. T. (Sonny) Goldston introduced the Complex-Wide Environmental Management Integration (EMI) by explaining that at the last meeting he had reviewed the EMI initiative purpose, process and accomplishments. And today he was here to go through specific recommendations for SRS in the areas of low level waste, mixed waste, transuranic (TRU) waste, and the use of the Consolidated Incineration Facility (CIF) for DOE waste incineration.

Mr. Goldston discussed his participation in a teleconference call earlier in the day with the EMI Project Management Team (PMT). During the conference call, they discussed action plans which are being developed to implement the EMI recommendations and integrate with the Accelerating Cleanup Plan: Focus on 2006. EMI is also an opportunity to improve the "Accelerating Cleanup: Focus on 2006" plan objectives and includes stakeholder input on recommendations. Ms. McCracken asked if DOE had a comprehensive transportation plan (rail, truck, air, waterways) and she noted she had only seen references to rail and truck transportation. Brent Daugherty said he did not know of a comprehensive plan, but that transportation plans exist for specific waste streams.

Cliff Thomas discussed the EMI recommendations for SRS Low Level Waste (LLW) including consolidation, minimizing storage and treatment, and the disposition of special case waste containing long-lived radionuclides such as Carbon-14. He noted that the consolidation of LLW

disposal operations at the Nevada Test Site was one option recommended by the EMI low-level team. Mr. Thomas said, however that detailed cost analysis would have to be performed before the best alternative could be determined. Bill Lawless asked if they would provide the results of the detailed cost analysis. Mr. Thomas said that before these detailed cost analyses were undertaken the "acceptability" of the option would have to be determined. He noted, for example, that even if consolidating LLW disposal at NTS was the most cost effective, if it was not publicly acceptable it would not be pursued. Bill Lawless agreed and said that was the reason why the SRS CAB had recommended holding a national forum on EMI to deal with these overarching, national issues. Mr. Lawless said it would be difficult without a national forum to go forward with the SRS specific recommendations. Mr. Lawless asked what type of input was needed from the subcommittee. Mr. Thomas explained that the input requested from the CAB was support for the specific activities; and if there are no major objections, the evaluation of these various activities presented will be pursued to see how to best save money.

Mr. Thomas then discussed the mixed low level waste and said the main objective here was to maximize the use of existing DOE facilities by consolidating, sharing facilities, and using a national procurement for laboratories and other contracts. He also pointed out that if a de minimus or "below regulatory concern" level for radionuclide content could be established there could be significant cost savings. Mr. Thomas explained that some mixed low level waste had such a low radionuclide content that it was difficult to distinguish between background radiation and DOE made radiation. If de minimus standards were in place there would be more flexibility in characterization, treatment and disposal and more ability to utilize the CIF. For the special case wastes and those mixed wastes requiring incineration, Mr. Thomas said the EMI recommendation was to treat these wastes at existing facilities rather than building new facilities.

Questions and discussions followed concerning the differences in the flow charts in the EMI report and the flowcharts presented at the meeting, the cost bases and their reliability, and the use of CIF. It was explained that the flow charts presented were more recent than those in the EMI report, and reflected updated information.

Brent Daugherty reviewed the EMI TRU waste recommendations, including consolidating TRU waste storage and improving transportation systems for TRU waste. Mr. Daugherty noted that transportation issues were significant with TRU waste because there was only one approved container for shipping TRU waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, (WIPP) and that a significant quantity of the TRU waste at SRS exceeded the acceptance criteria for this container (the TRUPAC II). He said the consolidation of TRU waste at a few sites that had treatment (repackaging) facilities to prepare TRU waste for final shipment to WIPP would allow smaller sites, such as Mound, to close. The efforts to have the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) change the rules and requirements for shipping TRU waste in TRUPAC II were also discussed. Dale Ormond noted that progress was being made in the negotiations and he expected a favorable change in the allowed maximum curie content for individual shipping containers to be approved. Mr. Daugherty reviewed the various plans for cost effective repackaging facilities and also the initiatives for reducing schedule times.

Mr. McDonnell questioned the safety of using manual methods for repackaging and Mr. Lawless asked about the other hazards associated with Pu238 such as the likelihood of explosion. Mr.

Daugherty said there was little likelihood of explosion due to ventilation requirements and that the facility design was still evolving and it probably will include remote control, robotics, and other features to ensure effectiveness and safety. Ms. McCracken requested additional information on national procurements and asked if local vendors would be used. Mr. Thomas said national procurement was more a centralization of the contracting paperwork and not a centralization of the vendors.

In conclusion, feedback and response was requested on whether or not to go forward with the EMI SRS concepts and recommendations. It was noted that the State would be concerned with equity issues. Mr. McDonnell suggested there was value in looking at TRU waste contingencies in case funding was not available for WIPP. Lee Poe noted that a no action option had been evaluated in the WIPP SEIS (which predicts about 2200 deaths). It was decided to discuss the option of on-site long term storage/disposal of the TRU waste at SRS (200 to 400 years) at a November meeting.

Todd Crawford discussed a motion on decommissioning three small experimental reactors he had developed in collaboration with Pete Gray. Mr. Crawford explained originally there were 10 reactors at SRS. The five production reactors in C, K, L, P, and R areas are shut down and awaiting decommissioning plans and actions. One reactor was the Heavy Water Components Test Reactor (HWCTR) in B-Area which is now in the process of decommissioning. The other four reactors are test reactors in the A/M area fairly near the Site boundary. One of these test reactors (in 305-M) was decommissioned and removed during the 1980's. The other three test reactors remain in building 777-10A which is now used for television studios. The building (777-10A) was used from 1953 to around 1980 as the experimental physics building. These experimental facilities were essential to the design and safe operation of the SRS production reactors. Mr. Crawford said these three reactors were used to support the production reactors by running lattice tests, plumbing tests and fuel/target designs. With the advent of increased computer capabilities in the 1970's the experimental facilities were no longer needed.

Mr. Crawford noted that these were small, low power reactors and were probably fairly clean. Mr. Crawford said decommissioning would free up space and was a logical follow-up to the HWCTR decommissioning. Mike Sujka asked why these reactors were chosen rather than any of the other site facilities. Bill Lawless explained that this was a follow-up to a suggestion by Pete Gray which came about as a result of Mr. Gray's involvement in the HWCTR motion. Bill Lawless asked Thomas Johnson how he viewed this proposal. Mr. Johnson said that the money for this work would be defense related funds, the decommissioning of these reactors had a low priority and that the funding was not available. Mr. Johnson further stated that he thought part 2 of the draft motion, which was to continue the current action of storage, was not helpful. Feedback on the motion was requested. Discussion centered around a motion that would establish decommissioning priorities.

Mr. Johnson gave an update on HWCTR and said the award of the decommissioning contract was scheduled for September 27. Bill Lawless asked what the dollar cost of the subcontract would be and Mr. Johnson said he did not have that information yet. Mr. Johnson said a large part of the cost would be the disposal of the waste generated on-site from the HWCTR

decommissioning. Mr. Lawless asked Mr. Johnson to come to a September 16 meeting for additional discussions.

The last topic was a discussion of issues for the Subcommittee to consider in future meetings. A draft table of issues was handed out and discussed. It was noted that the table needed to be completed and distributed for review so a schedule could be developed. Lee Poe noted that when citizens are involved in being a proponent for an issue or option there needs to be a "level playing field" and fair and equal access to the relevant data. Mr. Poe further stated that he had requested information on the SRL Seepage Basins and it had not been provided. Bill Lawless asked that the information on the SRL Seepage Basins be provided to Mr. Poe. Mr. Lawless asked that the table include the originator of the request, motion manager and other items.

Bill Lawless closed the meeting at 8:30 .

***Meeting handouts may be obtained by calling 1-800-249-8155.***