



SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Nuclear Materials Management Subcommittee

Meeting Summary

June 13, 1997 10 a.m.

Augusta Sheraton Hotel

The Nuclear Materials Management Subcommittee met on June 13, 1997, at 10 a.m. at the Augusta Sheraton Hotel. Subcommittee Chair Tom Costikyan resided over the meeting. Board members present included Jimmy Mackey, Suzanne Matthews, Kathryn May, Karen Patterson, Ed Tant and Beaurine Wilkins. Board facilitator Walt Joseph and Board advisors Todd Crawford and David Porter were also in attendance. Jean Ridley served as the Associate Deputy Designated Federal Official for the Department of Energy (DOE). Other DOE representatives included speaker Jon Wolfsthal and Linda Lingle from DOE-HQ and Jim Giusti and Charlie Anderson from DOE-Savannah River. In attendance from Westinghouse Savannah River Company were Donna Martin, Dawn Haygood, Mal McKibben, John Dickenson, Ray Conatser and Mark DuPont. Lee Poe, Ed Lyman, Stan Hobson, and Bob Matthews of the general public also attended. Lynn Waishwell of CRESA was present as well.

Jon Wolfsthal of the DOE Office of Arms Control and Nonproliferation provided a presentation on the Nonproliferation Study of Research Reactor Spent Fuel Management Alternatives (see attached). Mr. Wolfsthal stated this study would provide a broad view of all the decision alternatives regarding international nonproliferation implications. Multi-faceted, the study will address issues such as public acceptance, costs and schedules, environmental implications, etc. He stated it is incumbent upon the people making the decisions to have a wider perspective of the issues and this study, which is not a decision document, will help provide that perspective. Mr. Wolfsthal explained he was looking for input from the CAB on the subject matter and process outlined for conducting the study. He hoped to gain validation that the study was at least a reasonable and balanced view of the management alternatives.

Mr. Wolfsthal discussed the Record of Decision on Foreign Research Reactor Fuel Management stating that DOE had committed to commission or conduct an independent study of the nonproliferation and other (cost and timing) implications of chemical separation of spent fuel from the foreign research reactors. The study has since been expanded to include domestic spent fuel and address all management alternatives. A Notice of Intent (NOI) to conduct the study was published on April 24, 1997, said Mr. Wolfsthal. The NOI was mailed to 250 stakeholders, placed on the Internet and a toll-free number was established for comments, however few comments were received, he said. He stressed that public input was essential to the study. Bill Sutcliffe of Lawrence Livermore is currently drafting the study. John Dickenson questioned if the data being utilized was from the same source as environmental impact statement. Mr. Wolfsthal stated it is, however the information is subject to independent validation.

Mr. Wolfsthal stated the study would look at the different alternatives for spent fuel management and assess the advantages and disadvantages of each. The study would not simply throw stones, but also offer fixes. Any fixes suggested would be sent back for costing, he said. Mr. Wolfsthal stated that experts are being identified to review the study. Primarily, academia with nonproliferation expertise and former government officials are being considered, he said. Mr. Wolfsthal stressed that all arguments for and against all alternatives and all opinions would be represented and provided to the decisionmakers. Karen Patterson asked what is the relative weight of this report as opposed to the EIS. She stated that generally when writing an EIS, the author usually has a preferred alternative in mind. Mr. Wolfsthal responded he was unsure of the relative weight of the study against the EIS, but that his group is concerned with nonproliferation and the best policy, domestically and internationally.

Mr. Wolfsthal discussed public involvement and review stating that this same presentation had been provided for the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and that dialogue will continue with both the CAB and the State. He explained that the study is on the same time line as the SRS Spent Nuclear Fuel EIS with a draft available by the end of August for a 45-day public comment period and a final report available in November. He discussed how the scope of the study had increased from foreign fuel and reprocessing in the F Canyon to including domestic fuel and reprocessing in H Canyon and then to research reactor fuel management and the implications of all alternatives.

Mr. Wolfsthal gave past examples of studies. He explained that his office was not just asking the public to trust them, but instead they wanted to lay out their reasoning and ask for ideas. The Nonproliferation and Arms Control Assessment of Weapons-Usable Fissile Material Storage and Excess Plutonium Disposition was released in January 1997. A 232-page document, by comparison, he expected the study on research reactor fuel to be much smaller -but balanced, complete and concise. He also discussed a similar study on the National Ignition Facility and the Issue of Nonproliferation from 1995.

Mr. Wolfsthal discussed initial study criteria, both technical and policy criteria. Criteria such as how do you prove to people that materials cannot be diverted. The United States is the leader in both the Test Ban Treaty and international standards. We want to make sure that management alternatives are consistent with this objective, he stated. We want to remain in a position to stop activities we don't like, he said.

Lee Poe provided comments on the direction of the study stating that the outline is not focused and goes to far afield addressing the world implications of SRS actions. He suggested that policy criteria not be included in the study, but stated he liked the rest of the study outline. Mr. Wolfsthal replied that the technical aspects are relatively easy to analyze, but from a policy standpoint, there are so many other things to be achieved, such as trying to get rid of materials we no longer need and decisions on how to handle what we do. He stated the study should be as inclusive as possible. Tom Costikyan disagreed with Mr. Poe stating that he would prefer broader insight.

Mr. Wolfsthal concluded by emphasizing that this study is not a decisional document, but a report to lay out all the negatives and positives of all the spent fuel management alternatives. He

stated he hoped to get input on whether the approach makes sense or is missing anything major. He stated he would go as many miles as necessary to get specific and substantial comments.

Jimmy Mackey commented that the CAB should see a draft of the study before providing input. Mr. Wolfsthal replied he was here to begin a continuous dialogue and would be back once a draft was available.

Lee Poe offered additional comments on the study. He requested that the analyses focus on the functional intent of the study. He stated he had read the Foreign Research Reactor EIS and knew far more than he needed to and therefore it was important to keep this study focused and not repeat background information. This is the only way to seriously achieve stakeholder input. Mr. Poe's key comment is to focus the study as close as possible on the alternatives and the nonproliferation aspects of the alternatives. It was not clear to Mr. Poe that there was value in looking at costs and scheduling within the study.

Tom Costikyan closed the meeting by thanking Jon Wolfsthal for his presentation. A follow-up subcommittee was scheduled for June 30 in Beaufort, S.C. to develop subcommittee comments on the outline of the study.

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