



SRS Citizen's Advisory Board

September 1998 Meeting Minutes

SRS Citizens Advisory Board

September 29, 1998 8:30 a.m.
Sheraton Augusta Hotel
Augusta, GA

Members Present

Arthur Belge	Lane Parker	<u>Ex-Officio Representatives</u>
Tom Costikyan	Karen Patterson	Tom Heenan
Mary Elfner	Maria Reichmanis	Ann Clark
Ken Goad	Lola Richardson	Julie Corkran
Brendolyn Jenkins	P.K. Smith	Jeff Crane
Bill Lawless	Ed Tant	Jim Brownlow (alternate)
vAnn Loadholt	Wade Waters	
Kathryn May	Beaurine Wilkins	
Barbara Murphy	Becky Witter	

Members absent were Bill Adams, Bill Donaldson and Jimmy Mackey. Currently, there are four Board vacancies. The Department of Energy (DOE) Designated Federal Official present was Tom Heenan. Mike Schoener served as the Facilitator.

The meeting was open to the public and posted in the Federal Register in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

Ann Loadholt welcomed members from the Pantex and Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Boards joining the SRS CAB for its two-day meeting. The group also toured SRS during its visit.

Key Decisions Made by the Board

The Board adopted a recommendation regarding FY2000 funding requirements that requested sufficient funding for the following: stabilization of Americium/Curium solution; the new Plutonium Storage project and Actinide Packaging and Storage Facility; and high level waste tank supernate processing upgrades.

The Board adopted its first resolution commending the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory for the Rainbow Bay Project. The resolution stated the Board believes that continuing research at Rainbow Bay is in the interest of the nation, the stakeholders and the advancement of science.

A unanimous recommendation offering general and specific recommendations on the DOE Order 435.1 was passed.

A recommendation that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region IV and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) determine under what conditions they would approve disposal of CERCLA wastes that meet the appropriate waste acceptance criteria in an SRS-operated, DOE-regulated waste disposal facility, particularly the E Area trenches, was adopted.

A fourth recommendation that SRS enact the preferred alternative of shipping the contaminated soils to Utah and backfilling to the original grade was also adopted. Although the SRS CAB does not believe this to be the most efficient, cost effective option and does not measurably increase health and safety, the CAB is concurring because the agencies have finally agreed on a remedial option and further reviews would only delay closure.

Approval of Minutes

The July 1998 meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

Agency Update

Julie Corkran, EPA, announced that a new Federal Facility website had been established and suggested this site be linked to the SRS CAB home page. Ann Clark, SCDHEC, announced that public input had been received during recent forums held to gain public input for areas of improvement. Responses are being developed and will be made available to the public, she said. Tom Heenan deferred his agency update to DOE-SR Manager Greg Rudy. Mr. Rudy addressed various SRS operations noting that the Defense Waste Processing Facility was currently shut down for maintenance after filling 250 canisters of vitrified high level waste. F Canyon is open and H Canyon should open in December, he said. He remarked that the Environmental Restoration Program continues to operate safely and cost effectively. Mr. Rudy stated that the SRS budget for FY99 looked positive, however, it was too early to gage for FY2000. He discussed recent Round Robin meetings held at the major DOE sites regarding environmental management integration and stated the SRS CAB Recommendation No. 63 had been extremely useful, a powerful example of stakeholder concerns. Mr. Rudy also briefly discussed the following five key focus areas at SRS: safety, technical competency, communication and trust, cost effectiveness, and corporate management.

Public Comments

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

Mr. Minot commented to Greg Rudy that he appreciated the information presented in the Operations Update, however, he thought the information would be more useful if it addressed the actual amount of hazard or radioactive being addressed instead of the number of waste containers or acres remediated.

Trish McCracken, Augusta, Ga. Resident

Ms. McCracken offered her newsletter regarding the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Pilot Program stating that according to a GAC report, the NRC did not address major issues.

Risk Management & Future Use (RM&FU) Subcommittee Report

Subcommittee Chair P.K. Smith briefly discussed the schedule for the Comprehensive Plan stating drafts would be available for review on October 30 and November 30, with a submittal to DOE-Headquarters in late February 1999.

Jim Heffner of Westinghouse Savannah River company gave an overview of the SRS Environmental Report for 1997 (see attached). He discussed the compliance record for 1997, noting several highlights such as radiological emissions continue to be low; radiation dose to the public is small and continues to decline; and although four notices of violation were issued to SRS, no fines were incurred. He provided date on atmosphere tritium releases; liquid releases; nonradiological effluent monitoring; and the history of NPDES exceedances. Mr. Heffner discussed radiological environmental surveillance and fish monitoring and noted potential doses for 1997. He also provided a perspective slide describing various

doses of radiation received from different sources. Discussion revolved around regulatory standards, impacts of new regulations and the 1997 notices of violations, which were of a procedural nature.

Milton Russell, Chair of the WSRC Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC), provided a presentation on the independent review of the SRS Environmental Report for 1997 (see attached). He first discussed the mission of the EAC which is to provide independent advice on an unrestricted set of issues to assist SRS in achieving safe, health, and ecologically sound operations and decisions for the present and future. The committee consists of seven nationally recognized experts. Dr. Russell gave a brief background on each of the members. He discussed the committee's mode of operation, process and limitations.

Dr. Russell discussed the EAC review of the Environmental Report noting there were 412 individual comments on the 1997 report and the WSRC response is 95 pages. He provided the EAC conclusions noting the committee finds less to criticize each year. Improvements for the '98 report identified include more presentation of context and implications, better chapter summaries and more presentation of absolute and comparative risk levels. He noted constraints imposed by regulatory requirements and DOE rules that increased the data portion of the report unnecessarily. Ann Clark commented that these issues should be discussed to identify where there may be leeway and what is merely historical baggage. SRS CAB members requested a copy of the EAC review and WSRC responses to comments.

P.K. Smith presented a subcommittee draft motion on Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 funding requirements (see attached). It recommended the following:

- **DOE provide sufficient funding in FY2000 for the technical programs needed to assure successful stabilization of Americium/Curium solutions**
- **funding for the new Plutonium Storage Project and the Actinide Packaging and Storage Facility be protected**
- **sufficient funding be provided for high level waste tank supernal processing upgrades**
- **if funds are not available- that DOE-SR make a strong effort to fit these items into the approved FY2000 funding level**

Bill Lawless moved that the Board accept the subcommittee's motion and Karen Patterson seconded. The recommendation (*Fiscal Year 2000 Funding Requirements*) was adopted with fifteen members in favor and one abstention by Lane Parker due to his affiliation with a local labor union.

Nuclear Materials Management Subcommittee Report

Subcommittee Chair Tom Costikyan discussed the delay in the SRS Spent Fuel Environmental Impact Statement schedule, noting the subcommittee hope to review it prior to the November Board meeting. He also discussed the special presentation by Milt Levenson of the National Academy of Sciences regarding the report "Research Reactor Aluminum Spent Fuel: Treatment Options for Disposal." The scope of the report was to determine if all appropriate technologies were considered; if the waste form and package program was acceptable; and the credibility of the costs and schedules. Levenson had identified five major areas with serious questions. Mr. Costikyan discussed Levenson's comments regarding chemical processing. Levenson noted that not considering chemical processing was not valid. This is a credible option that should be considered for treatment of spent fuel, which the Board has recommended on several occasions, he said.

Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB)

Kent Fortenberry of the DNFSB gave an overview regarding the Board (see attached). He provided biographies on each of the five board members and discussed the major functions and powers of this board with 95 employees. The DNFSB is an Executive Branch agency established by Congress in 1988. It reports to Congress and the President. The Board provides independent safety oversight at defense

nuclear facilities. The DNFSB reviews and evaluates standards, conducts investigations, analyzes design and operational data, reviews facility design and constructions and makes recommendations to the Secretary of Energy. Mr. Fortenberry discussed open recommendations applicable to SRS such as improving technical capability, improved schedule for remediation, safety standards for low level waste and In-Tank Precipitation. Board members questioned if the DNFSB made policy recommendations. Mr. Fortenberry stated they did from a technical standpoint. The SRS CAB also inquired about DNFSB interactions with other committees and regulatory agencies such as the EAC or NRC. Mr. Fortenberry responded that they did not have regular interactions, but maintained close communications.

Public Comments

Members of the public asked clarifying questions of the morning presenters. Lynn Waishwell of CRESP offered clarifying information regarding a study on subsistence fisherman, stating the report will be available shortly. Two members of the public urged the SRS CAB to provide a strong recommendation in support of the Rainbow Bay project. Bob Stokes offered an invitation to the SRS CAB to participate in an upcoming Southeastern Environmental Management Association conference on November 5 in Martinez, Ga. He noted that Ex-officio member Tom Heenan is the keynote speaker.

Environmental Remediation & Waste Management (ER&WM) Subcommittee

SRS CAB member Karen Patterson introduced Whit Gibbons of the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory to provide a presentation on the Rainbow Bay project. This project is the world's longest amphibian study. Dr. Gibbons stated that the Rainbow Bay was one of over 200 Carolina Bays at SRS, which is protected as a National Environmental Research Park. A control area or "set aside" area, such as Rainbow Bay, allows long-term studies; benefits students; and provides outreach opportunities. The Rainbow Bay is internationally recognized and has offered important research findings regarding the decline of amphibians. Dr. Gibbons discussed the daily requirements at Rainbow Bay. Eight-eight bucket traps have been checked daily since 1978 and over ¾ million amphibians have been captured and released back into the environment. They are recaptured frequently. He noted he recently caught a turtle that had been tagged in November 1968. Dr. Gibbons discussed the overall implications of amphibians declining and noted benefits of continuing the project.

Subcommittee Co-Chair Kathryn May read a subcommittee motion commending SREL for these studies. The motion stated the Board believes it is in the interest of the nation, the stakeholders and the advancement of science that the research at Rainbow Bay continue. Bill Lawless moved that the Board accept the motion and Lane Parker seconded. P.K. Smith stated she would prefer to see this motion forwarded as a resolution in light of the earlier funding recommendation adopted by the Board. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the amendment and adopted the original motion as a resolution (*Rainbow Bay Resolution*) by a unanimous vote as well.

Lee Poe provided a status of the stakeholder review of high level waste salt disposition alternatives (see attached). He gave a brief background of the In Tank Precipitation problem (higher than expected production of benzene) and discussed how the stakeholder focus group was established. The team consists of six individuals – two CAB members, the CAB technical advisor and three interested stakeholders. The focus group reviewed the WSRC process for selecting alternatives to ITP in June and July and then reviewed four WSRC selected alternatives in August. The Focus Group planned to issue its report to the CAB, DOE-SR and WSRC by mid-October and review findings with the ER&WM Subcommittee in late October. The full CAB will be briefed at the November meeting.

Sonny Goldston of British Nuclear Fuel Limited, Inc. gave a brief overview of the DOE Order 435.1 regarding Radioactive Waste Management. This Order will replace the existing DOE 5820.2A. New or modified requirements are driven primarily by the DNFSB 94-2 recommendation. Bill Lawless had requested an extension of the public comment period on this draft order to ensure CAB input. Mr. Goldston discussed some of the most significant changes to the Order such as DOE approval of

documents; transuranic design requirements; and a one year storage limit on low level waste with no path to disposal. **Bill Lawless read the subcommittee's lengthy motion (see attached) providing general and specific recommendations on the DOE Order 435.1. Becky Witter moved the CAB accept the recommendation and Karen Patterson seconded. The recommendation (*DOE Order 435.1 - Radioactive Waste Management*) was adopted by a unanimous vote.**

Karen Patterson read the subcommittee's next motion, "Disposal of Low-Level Radioactive Waste from SRS CERCLA Sites in Trenches of SRS Low Level Waste Disposal Facility" (see attached). The recommendation provides a history of SRS CAB discussions with EPA and SCDHEC regarding disposal of CERCLA wastes at SRS. It recommends that EPA Region IV and SCDHEC determine under what conditions they would approve disposal of CERCLA wastes that meet the appropriate waste acceptance criteria in an SRS-operated, DOE-regulated waste disposal facility, and particularly if they would approve disposing of CERCLA soils in the E Area trenches. Bill Lawless moved the Board accept the recommendation and Brendolyn Jenkins seconded. Julie Corkran stated there had been productive discussions in the ER&WM Subcommittee requiring much clarification and that EPA had sent a letter to Tom Heenan since EPA was not even sure DOE contemplates the need for CERCLA disposal. Jeff Crane noted there might be other options than the slit trenches such as a waste consolidation program. Mr. Heenan stated that he understood the next waste unit requiring this issue to be resolved was slated for 2006. Ann Clark noted that there had been ongoing dialogue said it might be beneficial to analyze under what conditions to "leave the door cracked and when it should be shut." **The Board adopted the motion (*Disposal of Low-Level Radioactive Waste from SRS CERCLA Site in Trenches of SRS Low Level Waste Disposal Facility*) by a vote of 15 in favor and one abstention by Lane Parker due to his labor union affiliation.**

Karen Patterson read another draft motion regarding SRL Seepage Basin contaminated soils disposal (see attached). This motion recommends that SRS enact the preferred alternative of shipping the contaminated soils to Utah and backfilling to the original grade. Although the SRS CAB does not believe this to be the most efficient, cost effective option, and does not measurably increase health and safety; the CAB is concurring because the agencies have finally agreed on a remedial option and further reviews would only delay closure. The SRS CAB also has no reason to believe that EPA Region IV will now consider disposal in the slit trenches an acceptable alternative even though there has been an affirmative determination I place since 1996 and other DOE facilities have been disposing of CERCLA waste in DOE-regulated facilities. Bill Lawless moved the Board adopt the recommendation and Wade Waters seconded. Tom Costikyan remarked that this motion sounds like "we give up." Karen Patterson stated this was not giving in, the closure is still accelerated by 15 months and this remedial alternative worked out better for the agencies. The issues of CERCLA disposal still remained to be addressed as requested in the previous motion however this will not cause a delay in an expedited SRL Seepage Basin closure, which the Board wanted all along. SRS does not want to lose the opportunity of working during the winter months, she said. The CAB adopted the recommendation (*SRL Seepage Basin Contaminated Soils Disposal*) with 14 members in favor and two abstentions. Brendolyn Jenkins stated she was not comfortable voting at the present time, and Lane Parker abstained due to his labor union affiliation.

Low Level Waste Seminar Report/Action

Brendolyn Jenkins reported on the recent Low Level Waste Seminar hosted by the Nevada Test Site CAB. The seminar was very good, she said, commending the facilitators for keeping the meeting on track and productive. The meeting was focused on specific objectives, which were accomplished, she said. Several outcomes of the meeting included an assignment for SSABs to rank the Waste Management PEIS options for managing low level waste and to discuss supportability for seventeen other issues identified during the seminar. In November, the SRS CAB will be asked to rank these seventeen issues into the following three categories: those that we support and will take a lead role in pursuing; those in which we are neutral; and those that we do not support.

Administrative Subcommittee Report

Subcommittee Chair Beaurine Wilkins announced the 1999 membership review would be held in conjunction with the November Board meeting. She provided cards to all members up for re-election to determine their desire to remain on the board. She also requested a description of their contributions to the Board to be utilized during the selection process.

Budget Report

Budget Chair Wade Waters gave an update of the FY98 budget expenditures and discussed FY99 needs (see attached). As of August 1998, SRS CAB expenditures were \$258,245. The budget needs for FY99 were estimated at \$349,000.

Facilitator Update

Board Facilitator Mike Schoener suggested several changes to the CAB recommendation process (see attached). He discussed changing the status of recommendations on the current database to reflect if it is pending (not yet responded to); open (responses received but action not complete); or closed (action completed and requires no further tracking). He also suggested that responses from agencies be formally accepted or rejected by the CAB; that "closure criteria" be included in recommendations; and that all draft recommendations be submitted to all CAB members at least one week prior to the CAB meeting. He also discussed the need to address a "quantity vs. quality" issue and suggested a process retreat in January 1999.

National SSAB Chair Report

Ann Loadholt reported on the SSAB Chair meeting held September 16-17 in Boulder, Co. (see attached report). She noted that prohibition of travel to Washington, D.C. for SSAB members is to be lifted and SSAB Chairs plan to meet with Secretary Richardson when this happens. She announced that the next Chairs meeting will be hosted by SRS in February 1999 and that the next cross-site seminar would focus on transportation in the spring of 1999 and be hosted by Fernald.

ANS Topical Meeting Report

Karen Patterson reported on the ANS Topical meeting. She stated it appears that technical issues with spent nuclear fuel are on the way to being resolved and commented on Russian participation in the meeting. She commented on the SRS CAB involvement in the public participation portion of the meeting, which included a display/poster session and a paper regarding the SRS CAB educational forums. Ms. Patterson was very pleased with the SRS CAB's extensive sponsorship of the meeting and the support provided by Board members and staff.

Public Comments

Sydney Blankenship, Pantex SSAB Co-Chair and Bill Pardue, Oak Ridge SSAB Chair, thanked the SRS CAB for its hospitality, commenting on the civility and professionalism of the Board. Both found the two-day meeting to be very informative. George Washington of the Oak Ridge SSAB also commented, noting the diversity of the board and the need for diversity in employment at SRS as well. He implored the SRS CAB to reach out to tribal people and look into all the communities surrounding SRS.

Administrative Items

Giavanni Middlebrook of the Richmond County Alternative School was the September Essay Contest Winner. Walter Ashley won second place. Both received certificates and passes to Fort Discovery in Augusta, Ga.

Handouts

- SRS CAB Meeting Agenda, September 29, 1998
- September 1998 Operations Update, Tom Heenan, DOE
- An Overview of the Savannah River Site Environmental Report for 1997, Jim Heffner, WSRC
- Independent Review of the SRS Environmental Report 1997, Milton Russell, EAC
- Draft Motion, SRS CAB FY2000 Funding Requirements, P.K. Smith, SRS CAB
- Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, Kent Fortenberry
- DWPF and Rainbow Bay, J. Whitfield Gibbons, SREL
- Draft Motion Rainbow Bay, Kathryn May, SRS CAB
- Status of Stakeholder Review of HLW Salt Disposition Alternatives, Lee Poe
- DOE Order 435.1 (Draft) Radioactive Waste Management, W.T. Goldston, BNFL
- Draft Motion-Version Number 4 DOE Order 435.1 Radioactive Waste Management, Bill Lawless, SRS CAB
- Draft Motion, Disposal of Low-level Radioactive Waste Disposal from SRS CERCLA Sites in Trenches of SRS Low Level Waste Disposal Facility, Karen Patterson, SRS CAB
- Draft Motion, SRL Seepage Basin Contaminated Soils Disposal, Karen Patterson, SRS CAB
- Suggested Changes to SR-CAB Recommendation Process, Mike Schoener
- SRS CAB EM SSAB Chair Meeting Trip Report
- SRS Citizens Advisory Board Fiscal Year 1998 Budget Summary, Wade Waters
- Working Charter for Environmental Management Program Integration
- Letter from DOE-SR to SRS CAB dated September 11, 1998
- SRS CAB Recommendation Summary
- SRS CAB Public Involvement Calendar
- Monthly National Environmental Policy Act Report

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