



SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Joint Meeting of the Nuclear Materials and Waste Management Committees

North Augusta Community Center, North Augusta, SC

November 1, 2004

The SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Nuclear Materials Committee (NMC) and the Waste Management Committee (WMC) held a joint meeting on Monday, November 1, 2004, at the North Augusta Community Center, North Augusta, SC. The purposes of the meeting were to discuss the Transuranic (TRU) Black Box Repackaging in F-Canyon, Processing H-Canyon Low Level Waste to Saltstone, the SRS Treatability Study Returns, and to receive public comment.

Attendance was as follows:

CAB Members

- Bill Willoughby
- Bill Lawless
- Gerald Devitt
- Karen Patterson
- Bob Meisenheimer
- William Lawrence
- Perry Holcomb
- Leon Chavous
- Wendell Lyon

Stakeholders

- Bill McDonell
- Joe Whetstone
- J. Wedlock
- Lee Poe

*Rick McLeod

DOE/Contractors

- Tom Treger, DOE
- Jim Bolen, DOE
- Kevin Smith, DOE
- G. Flemming, DOE
- Doug Hintze, DOE
- George Klipa, DOE
- Greg Johnson, DOE
- Joe Carter, WSRC
- Richard Edwards, WSRC
- Mike Logan, WSRC
- Keith Atkinson, WSRC
- Michael Chandler, WSRC
- William Tadlock, WSRC
- John Dickenson, WSRC
- Sonny Goldston, BNFL-SW
- Craig Martin, WSRC
- Bob Hottel, WSRC
- Tim Vincent, WSRC

Regulators

Shelly Sherritt, SCDHEC

*CAB Technical Advisor

-NM or WM committee members

+Facilitator

^Press

- Frank England, WSRC
- Jim Moore, WSRC
- Lyddie Broussard, WSRC

Note: Jean Sulc, Nuclear Materials Committee member and Murray Riley, Waste Management Committee member did not attend this meeting.

Bill Lawless called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. He welcomed those in attendance and asked Doug Hintze to provide an update on the status of the Lindsey Graham amendment. Mr. Hintze said the President had signed the FY05 National Defense Authorization Act, which contains provisions (Section 3116, 3117 and 3146), which resolves the WIR lawsuit for SRS and Idaho. He said work was underway to interpret the language and how to apply it. He explained that discussions with DOE Headquarters are ongoing, but additional information is needed. He said that the bill requires a consultation process with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, but how this requirement will be met will require additional examination. Stakeholders were advised that this should not be construed to be a further delay since one of the assumptions in the schedule was when this amendment became law, there would be a 10-month implementation process. When asked about the impact of a requirement for a study to be conducted by the National Academy of Science, Mr. Hintze replied that they are looking into it.

Jerry Devitt then introduced the first presentation as one that was appropriate for both the NMC and WMC members since it deals with waste issues and their potential impact on the deactivation of F-Canyon.

TRU Black Box Repackaging in F-Canyon, Michael Logan, WSRC, Closure Business Unit

Sonny Goldston opened the presentation with a reminder that the success of the waste shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) was focused on shipping 55-gallon drummed waste. As past presentations had indicated, this is ongoing, but their major challenge is the non-drummed waste such as large black boxes. Such waste requires that it be repackaged before it can be placed into a shipping container. He introduced Mike Logan who is overseeing the repackaging in F-Canyon of two of the large black boxes into Standard Large Boxes, which are the inner containers for the TRUPACT III shipping containers.

Mr. Logan said deactivation is proceeding slightly ahead of schedule and is approximately 50 percent complete. He explained that the TRU Black Box Repackaging Pilot Project is staged in the warm canyon truckwell. Mr. Logan stated that by limiting the pilot project to only two of the black boxes, the work could be scheduled to prove the feasibility of the repackaging concept without impact to the F-Canyon deactivation schedule. Another advantage is that this pilot project is being conducted in a cost-effective manner by using an existing facility rather than building a new facility with the necessary controls.

He said the boxes selected contained waste that has been characterized as similar to other waste generated in F-Canyon. His personnel are very familiar with how to safely handle this type of waste and this work will not add to the source term remaining in the facility. Procedures call for strict contamination control methods and all job control waste generated by the repackaging efforts would be packaged into the Standard Large Boxes according to Mr. Logan. Upon completion of the pilot project, Mr. Logan said the lessons learned from the project will be evaluated to determine the best option for accelerating the disposition of legacy TRU waste.

Processing H-Canyon Low Level Waste to Saltstone, Tom Treger, US-DOE, Waste Disposition

Tom Treger began this presentation with an overview of the Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) Program objectives. He explained to the committee members that H-Canyon is actively

supporting our nation's non-proliferation goals through the removal of HEU from unirradiated fuel and blending it down with natural uranium to form a mixture suitable for commercial fuel fabrication. He explained that the remaining waste stream from this process is a low-level waste.

Mr. Treger reminded the committee members that they have been told that tank space is limited. He explained that to gain efficiencies, it was important to ensure that all low-level waste streams are properly handled. The low-level waste stream generated from the current canyon processing can be handled by permitted wastewater treatment facilities. To ensure there is no potential for cross contamination with high level waste, a dedicated transfer path is being established to a single tank. This tank, Tank 50, has not previously received high-level waste and is the feed tank for the Saltstone facility. This low-level waste stream feed to the tank from the canyon will begin shortly and is projected to end in 2006. When a sufficient volume of low-level waste is collected in the tank, a campaign to treat the waste will be conducted at the Saltstone facility. By using a direct transfer path for this low-level waste stream, a savings of 400,000 gallons of waste and significant cost avoidance will be realized by avoiding an unnecessary route into the tank farm.

SRS Treatability Study Returns, Shelly Sherritt, SCDHEC

Ms. Sherritt thanked the stakeholders for the opportunity to present the State of South Carolina's perspective on the waste sent by the Hanford Reservation to the Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) for a treatability study. She said the sample items in question were returned to Hanford in 83 drums, but the issue that is being debated is whether or not the waste returned should have been sent as a hazardous waste or does an exemption to the regulation apply. The State of Washington has issued a Notice of Violation to the Hanford Reservation, but the matter is still under consideration by the State of South Carolina.

Ms. Sherritt said the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) also raised this issue during a 2004 multi-media inspection. She explained that they are still evaluating the issue and it is centered under the treatability study exclusions in the regulations. The question that they are hoping to resolve is whether or not the waste sent to a site and returned with the residues back to the originating site should be treated as a hazardous waste. Ms. Sherritt said that the regulations are not clear and much research is being done to clarify the issue. She went on to say that it is possible that the two states will not agree on their interpretations of the regulations. Ms. Sherritt said they are very close to drawing to a conclusion and are working very closely with EPA on this matter.

Several members asked questions of site representatives but since the Notice of Violation issue has not been resolved, stakeholders were requested to write their questions so that a formal response could be prepared. Questions are included as follow-up action items in this summary.

Public Comments

Lee Poe publicly thanked Ms. Sherritt for her presentation. He also requested the committee consider requesting a presentation about the TRU waste drums that were found to have a head gas atmosphere that may exceed the lower flammability limit as identified in a recent report.

Joe Whetstone provided the committee members with copies of a paper entitled "What the DOE Knows it Doesn't Know about Grout " by Brice Smith of the Institute for Energy and

Environmental Research. He urged them to read it and said DOE doesn't have experience in grouting tanks and more experience is needed before action is taken on these tanks. He said that additional studies are needed on how the grout can keep the radionuclides from moving.

Lee Poe suggested that a briefing on this topic be requested.

With no other public comment, the meeting was adjourned.

Action Items

The following stakeholders have requested a response on the following questions relative to the SRS Treatability Study Returns:

1. Question from Lee Poe, "Were the 83 drums that were returned to Hanford the same 83 drums that were shipped from Hanford?"
2. Question from Rick McLeod, "Is this in the court system or in the EPA Administrative system?"
3. Question from Bill McDonell, "What is the status of the waste and what will happen to it? Is it a big deal?"
4. Questions from Bill Willoughby, "I understand that not all the samples and residue have been returned to Hanford -- some remains at SRS. Has it all been sent back? If not, how much is still at SRS? What is the estimate of the future volume and disposition?"