



**SRS Citizens Advisory Board**

**Nuclear Materials**

**Committee Meeting**

**Aiken Municipal Conference Center**

**Aiken, SC**

**June 20, 2006**

The Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Nuclear Materials Committee met on Tuesday, June 20, 2006, 5:00 PM, at the Aiken Municipal Conference Center. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the CAB NM Recommendation review; SRS Nuclear Materials Stabilization, Past, Present, Future, and to hear public comment. Attendance was as follows:

**CAB Members**

- Joe Ortaldo
- Wade Waters
- Mary Drye
- Leon Chavous
- Manuel Bettencourt
- Wendell Lyons
- Gerald Devitt
- Donna Antonucci
- Kuppuswamy Jayaraman
- Meryl Alalof

**Stakeholders**

- Lee Poe
- Russ Messick
- Mike French
- Jack Roberts

**DOE/Contractors**

- de'Lisa Bratcher, DOE
- Faith Anderson, DOE
- Jay Ray, DOE
- Pat McGuire, DOE
- Paul Sauerborn, WSRC
- \*\*Kevin Smith, DOE
- Jimmy Winkler, WSRC
- Ron Oprea, WSRC
- Stuart MacVean, WSRC
- Dawn Gillas, DOE

*- NM committee members*

*\* CAB technical advisor*

*\*\* Deputy Designated  
Federal Official (DDFO)*

### **Welcome and Introduction:**

Manuel Bettencourt, Chair, welcomed those in attendance and asked them to introduce themselves. He also stated that the NM Tour held earlier today for the CAB members was excellent and thanked the efforts of Kevin Smith and all the presenters and support personnel. Mr. Bettencourt stated that Jerry Devitt who was the past NM Committee Chair, asked to make a statement. Mr. Devitt stood before the meeting attendees and stated that he had been on the board for 6 years and spent 3 years prior to his election onto the board attending CAB meetings. The purpose of his statement was to express extreme concern over the current developments regarding the administration of the CAB. He stated the SRS CAB has been touted as the best of the DOE complex and if that is the case then why does the administration need to change. He personally stated that it is his opinion that the administration of the CAB currently is excellent and that to change it would erode years of value and productivity which would leave the CAB less effective in dealing with matters concerning the site.

**Recommendation Review:** Manuel Bettencourt addressed the latest changes to the NM Recommendations status. Mr. Bettencourt stated that the latest CAB NM Recommendation number 232 allowed the following previous recommendations to be closed: #223, #218, #214, #196, and #177. Rick McLeod questioned Recommendation #177; he believed it should remain open. He stated that the CAB remains interested in the Spent Nuclear Fuel strategies to deal with various fuels throughout the DOE complex. Mr. McLeod suggested that the motion remain open for that reason. Mr. Bettencourt stated he would review the motion and reconsider moving the status from closed back to open.

**Nuclear Materials Stabilization, Past, Present, Future:** Ron Oprea stated that on September 23, 1949 President Truman announced Russia tested its first atomic weapon and subsequently on June 12, 1950 President Truman created the Atomic Energy Commission and asked E.I. DuPont de Nemours and Company to undertake a new atomic project located at the Savannah River Site. In 1950, construction began on H-Area and in 1955 it began operations. In 1992 the H-Canyon was placed in standby pending a DOE decision. Then in 1993, the Government Performance and Results Act was established to define the mission, identify long-term goals, and identify short-term performance. Mr. Oprea stated that H-Canyon has gone through safety upgrades with a focus on stabilizing Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) and Plutonium (Pu) materials as directed in DNFSB 94-1 and DNFSB 2000-1, which is to identify and reduce/eliminate potential safety risks associated with legacy nuclear materials.

Mr. Oprea pointed out that HB-Line from 1955 to the present has produced nuclear materials to support the Cold War, supported the Cassini exploration mission by providing Pu 238, and underwent safety upgrades focusing on stabilizing HEU and Pu oxides.

The present H Area mission is to recover and stabilize nuclear materials important to DOE in a safe and environmentally sound manner including the following:

- Dissolve nuclear fuels
- Recover enriched uranium, plutonium, and neptunium
- Convert isotopes into desired forms for “other uses”, storage and/or disposition

The DNFSB 2000-1 identified 54 commitments that SRS would have to address and correct. To-date 53 of the 54 have been completed and the last will be completed by the fourth quarter of this 2006.

Mr. Oprea stated that the present focus of Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) is the conversion of surplus HEU to commercial fuel as the preferred alternative, which supports non-proliferation goals. In addition, Plutonium Scrap (PuCS) is taken to HB-Line and repackaged for dissolution in the Canyon. The HEU blend down project mission dispositions 17.2 metric tons by blending down to 4.95% Low Enriched product meeting the Tennessee Valley Authority purity specification for beneficial use, and this project came in well under its baseline. The first batch of LEU went into the Browns Ferry Reactor in March of 2005. The Neptunium (Np) focus is for HB-Line to produce approximately 370 kilograms of Np Oxide and will be used for making Plutonium 238.

Mr. Oprea stated that in H Area safety comes first; H Canyon and HB-Line are one of a kind national asset for stabilization and disposition of legacy nuclear materials; and the site respects the taxpayer, the public, and the environment.

Jack Roberts asked why PuCS was sent from Rocky Flats to SRS. Mr. Oprea stated the plutonium scrap from Rocky Flats is processed through the Canyon and then processed at a facility in Washington State and then sent to Browns Ferry as fuel for there reactor. Manuel Bettencourt asked about future missions for H Canyon and HB-Line. Kevin Smith responded that within a few weeks the FY07 Budget should be available and additional nuclear material missions should be identified. The FY07 activities may include retooling and upgrading the canyon.

**Public Comment:** Manuel Bettencourt stated that he would like to start a motion on the continued viable use of the H Canyon and HB-Line. Other meeting participants agreed with moving forward on the motion.

**Adjourn:** Manuel Bettencourt adjourned the meeting at 6:40PM.