Recommendation 331
Improve Public Participation

Background
According to the Standard Operating Procedures\(^1\) of the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB), the CAB’s purpose is to “provide independent advice and recommendations to the U. S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management (EM) or the Manager at the Savannah River Operations Office. The SRS CAB draws on diverse community viewpoints to provide its advice and recommendations, with a goal of directly involving stakeholders in EM planning and decision-making processes on the SRS cleanup.” In order to fulfill this purpose, the CAB is to “provide for public involvement in the Board’s advisory process by making information available to the public, holding open meetings, communicating efforts and results and creating opportunities for the public to participate in the process.” In addition, the CAB will “serve as an interface with other boards and groups dealing with SRS issues to share information and avoid unwanted duplication of effort.”

The membership of the board, listed under Article III, is “a broadly constituted organization consisting of a diverse group of people representing the interests and concerns of communities in South Carolina and Georgia affected by the Savannah River Site.”

Given the scope of the CAB’s charter and call for geographic and demographic diversity, CAB board and committee meetings should be hosted in locations that maximize opportunities for public participation. The areas affected by the Savannah River Site include several counties on both sides of the Savannah River, including: Aiken, Barnwell, Allendale, Hampton, Jasper and Beaufort counties in South Carolina, and Richmond, Columbia, Burke, Screven, Effingham, and Chatham counties in Georgia.

In the recent past, the SRS CAB regularly met in Hilton Head, SC, Columbia, SC and Augusta, GA annually. In 2014, all committee meetings for the SRS CAB were held only in Aiken County, SC. The full-board meetings were also held only in Aiken County, SC, except one meeting downstream in Beaufort, SC. In 2015, it is projected that all meetings will also be held in Aiken County, South Carolina, except for one meeting in Savannah, Georgia.

Recommendations
The SRS Citizens Advisory Board recommends that the Department of Energy:

1. Hold SRS CAB meetings in a more geographically diverse manner to allow counties affected by SRS to host more regional meetings and enable the greatest public participation. Reinstate SRS CAB meetings in Hilton Head, SC, Columbia,

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SC and Augusta, GA on a frequent basis to enhance the public’s opportunity to actively participate and share their concerns with the CAB.

2. Maximize efforts to attract public participation in CAB meetings. This should include updated electronic/social media information, newspaper information, and enhancing ways to advertise CAB meetings through city and county council notifications. Opportunities for public participation via telephone and the internet should be enhanced.

3. Restore funding to improve advertising of full-board and committee meetings to broadly notify the public. Advertising, at minimum, should include newspaper(s) in the host city of the meeting.

4. Enable CAB representation when planning SRS local public education and outreach events, such as Information Pods, Environmental Justice meetings, public tours of SRS, Earth Day exhibits, etc.