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# SAVANNAH RIVER SITE CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

P.O. Box A ♦ Building 730-B, Room 1184 ♦ Aiken, SC 29802



## A Department of Energy Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board

November 18, 2011

Dr. David Moody, Site Manager  
U.S. Department of Energy  
Savannah River Operations Office  
P. O. Box A  
Aiken, SC 29808

Dear Dr. Moody,

On behalf of the SRS Citizens Advisory Board, I am pleased to forward to you the following recommendation adopted at our November 15, 2011 Board meeting:

Recommendation #283 - Revising the Department of Energy Websites & Using Plain Language to Communicate with the Public More Effectively

We anticipate a written response to this recommendation prior to our next Board meeting on January 23-24, 2012.

Our appreciation to you and your staff for the support, information, and briefings provided that assisted us in the development of this recommendation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Donald Bridges, Chairperson  
SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Enclosures:  
Recommendation # 283

cc:  
Melissa Nielson, EM-42, DOE-HQ  
Catherine Alexander, EM-42, DOE-HQ  
Zack Smith, Deputy Manager, DOE-SR  
Doug Hintze, DDFO, DOE-SR  
Patrick McGuire, DDFO, DOE-SR  
Robert King, SCDHEC  
Gwen Keyes, EPA  
Albert Frazier, GADNR

The CAB's purpose is to provide advice and recommendations on environmental restoration, waste management, and related activities to DOE.

If you have questions or comments, please contact us at:  
Phone: 803-952-7884 • Toll Free: 1-800-249-8155 • Fax: 803-952-9228  
Email: [srsCitizensAdvisoryBoard@srs.gov](mailto:srsCitizensAdvisoryBoard@srs.gov)

For more information about the CAB, visit us at <http://cab.srs.gov>

### **Recommendation # 283**

#### **Revising the Department Of Energy Websites & Using Plain Language to Communicate with the Public More Effectively**

The ability of the government and its agencies or departments to communicate and collaborate with the public is viewed as important by the public at large. Recognizing this, in January 2009 President Obama issued the "Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government" in which the Director of the Office of Management and Budget was instructed to issue an Open Government Directive. Together with guidelines issued by Attorney General Eric Holder with regard to the Freedom of Information Act, the principle that openness is the Federal Government's default position was reinforced.

These initiatives were given another boost with The Plain Writing Act of 2010, which requires federal agencies to write government documents that the public can understand and use. As a result of this Act, the "Federal Plain Language Guidelines" was updated in May 2011. The Guidelines state that agencies should prepare documents so that "users can find what they need, understand what they find; and use what they find to meet their needs."

While the the Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board recognizes that it takes time for initiatives to be implemented, DOE's websites do not have adequate search features, documents are not readable, and many documents are not posted online.

For example, a search for "SRS" on [www.DOE.gov](http://www.DOE.gov) yields no results, and a search for "Community Involvement Plan" on [www.srs.gov](http://www.srs.gov) yields no results even though that document is posted on that website. To illustrate how documents intended for the public are not readable, the "Environmental Assessment For The Proposed Use Of Savannah River Site Lands For Military Training" (August 2011, U.S. Department Of Energy, Savannah River Operations Office, Savannah River Site) included a list of 83 acronyms. Finally, to date, only 10 of the 29 documents announced as available for public review in the 2011 "Environmental Bulletin from the Savannah River Site" are posted online (for full details, see the Attachment).

**Recommendation:** The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board recommends that DOE:

- 1) Review [www.srs.gov](http://www.srs.gov) and [www.DOE.gov](http://www.DOE.gov) to see how the two websites can be modified so that information about the Savannah River Site is readily available on both sites and vice versa.
- 2) Review [www.srs.gov](http://www.srs.gov) and [www.DOE.gov](http://www.DOE.gov) and revise as necessary to make all information accessible to all computer platforms.
- 3) Make all documents that are noted in the "Environmental Bulletin from the Savannah River Site" available online.
- 4) Write all documents intended for public use per the "Federal Plain Language Guidelines."
- 5) Review the "Open Government Directive" to determine to what extent Environmental Management at SRS is in compliance with the intent of the Directive in terms of publishing government information online and to present its findings to the CAB at a full board meeting no later than January 2012.

## ATTACHMENT

<b>Environmental Bulletin from the Savannah River Site</b>	<b>Date Published</b>	<b>Public comment announced</b>	<b>Online link</b>
New Mexico Community Foundation Announces APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FUND	January 10, 2001	N	Y
Removal Site Evaluation Report/Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (RSER/EE/CA) For the C Area Reactor Area Cask Car Railroad Tracks as Abandoned (NBN) Subunit at the Savannah River Site	January 14, 2011	Y	Y
PUBLIC INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN NRC/DOE CONFERENCE CALLS DISCUSSING THE F-TANK FARM DRAFT WASTE DETERMINATION BASIS FOR SRS	January 20, 2011	N	N/A
Public May View NEPA Planning Summary	January 26, 2011	N	Y
REVISED ACTION MEMORANDUM ISSUED FOR THE REMOVAL SITE EVALUATION REPORT/ENGINEERING EVALUATION/COST ANALYSIS (RSER/EE/CA) FOR THE REMOVAL ACTION OF TRITIUM CONTAMINATED SOIL AND CONCRETE at the MODERATOR PROCESSING SUBUNIT at the D AREA OPERABLE UNIT	February 17, 2011	N	N
Action Memorandum and Responsiveness Summary Issued for the C-Area Reactor Area Cask Car Railroad Tracks as Abandoned at the Savannah River Site	March 09, 2011	N	N
DOE to Hold Public Meeting on Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Disposal of Greater-Than-Class C Low-Level Radioactive Waste (GTCC) and GTCC-Like Waste	March 10, 2011	N	Y
Revision 5 Action Memorandum Issued for the Disposition of Water in the 105-P Disassembly Basin at the Savannah River Site	March 16, 2011	N	N
Removal Site Evaluation Report/Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (RSER/EE/CA) For the In Situ Decommissioning of the 105 C Disassembly Basin	March 23, 2011	Y	Y
Revision 2 Action Memorandum Issued for the Non Time Critical Removal Action for the 489 D Coal Pile Runoff Basin, D-006 Outfall, and 484-10 D Waste Oil Facility at the D Area Operable Unit	March 28, 2011	N	N
Action Memorandum Issued for Transfer of the D-006 Petroleum Release Site From the D Area Operable Unit to the Savannah River and Floodplain Swamp Integrator Operable Unit		N	N
Floodplain/Wetlands Assessment Issued for the D-006 Petroleum Release Site Removal Action at the Savannah River Site		Y	N
The Savannah River Site (SRS) H-Area Tank Farm Performance Assessment (HTF PA) is Available for Public Information	April 4, 2011	Y	Y
Interim Action for the Flexible Manufacturing Capability for the Mixed Fuel Fabrication Facility (MFFF) at the Savannah River Site Available for Public Review	April 13, 2011	N	Y
Hazardous Waste Permit Modification Requested for the Savannah River Site	April 15, 2011	Y	N
Record of Decision for the R Area Operable Unit at the Savannah River Site Available to the Public	April 20, 2011	N	N
Action Memorandum and Responsiveness Summary Issued for the In Situ Decommissioning of the 105 C Disassembly Basin at the Savannah River Site	May 19, 2011	N	N
FACT SHEET AVAILABLE FOR THE R AREA OPERABLE UNIT AT THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE	May 25, 2011	N	N
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY - RECORD OF DECISION FOR THE L AREA NORTHERN GROUNDWATER OPERABLE UNIT AT THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE	June 20, 2011	N	N
REMOVAL SITE EVALUATION REPORT/ENGINEERING EVALUATION/COST ANALYSIS (rsrer/ee/ca) FOR THE C AREA PROCESS SEWER LINES AS ABANDONED (NBN) SUBUNIT FOR THE C AREA OPERABLE UNIT AT THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE	June 23, 2011	Y	Y
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY - RECORD OF DECISION FOR THE GUNSITE 012 OPERABLE UNIT AT THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE	June 27, 2011	N	N
FLOODPLAIN ASSESSMENT ISSUED FOR THE STORMWATER DRAINAGE REPAIRS OF THE T AREA CAP AT THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE	August 29, 2011	Y	N
Draft EA prepared for the proposed use of SRS lands for military training (DOE/EA-1606)	August 29, 2011	Y	N
RCRA Permit Application Modification Requested for the Mixed Waste Management Facility at the Savannah River Site	September 12, 2011	Y	N
Action Memorandum and Responsiveness Summary issued for the C Area Process Sewer Lines as Abandoned (NBN) SUBUNIT for the C Area Operable Unit at the Savannah River Site	September 14, 2011	N	N
FACT SHEET AVAILABLE FOR THE GUNSITE 012 OPERABLE UNIT AT THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE	September 22, 2011	N	N
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY - EARLY ACTION RECORD OF DECISION FOR THE D AREA OPERABLE UNIT AT THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE	September 26, 2011	N	N
DOE Requests Temporary Authorization to Modify the Corrective Action System at the M-Area Hazardous Waste Management Facility at the Savannah River Site	October 21, 2001	N	N
Interim Action Determination for Disposition of Certain Plutonium Materials Stored at the Savannah River Site Available for Public Review	October 25, 2011	Y	Y
Industrial Wastewater Closure Module for the Liquid Waste Tanks 18 and 19 F-Area Tank Farm, Savannah River Site Available for Public Comment	October 31, 2011	Y	Y