



Department of Energy
Savannah River Operations Office
P.O. Box A
Aiken, South Carolina 29802

JAN 16 2008

Ms. Karen Patterson, Chair
Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Patterson:

**SUBJECT: Response to Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Recommendation #253 –
Consequences of Loss of Core Department of Energy (DOE) Funding by the
Savannah River Ecology Laboratory (SREL) (Your letter, 11/28/07)**

Thank you for your four-part recommendation concerning the SREL.

1. By January 28, 2008, DOE-SR provide a detailed inventory of the existing SREL physical resources, including facilities and analytical equipment, and describe the disposition plan for all items of significant value.

As you know, the December 1, 2006, Cooperative Agreement between DOE and the University of Georgia (UGA) Research Foundation phased out "core" funding for SREL. As the signed agreement stipulates, future DOE funding for SREL research will be project-specific and based upon need, merit, and funding availability. Under the terms of the agreement, DOE will continue to provide facilities and equipment to support the SREL program. Appendix E of the SREL Cooperative Agreement identifies the DOE buildings assigned to SREL. Appendix D of the agreement lists the government-owned property used by SREL.

In the future, the UGA plans to rely more heavily upon off-site laboratory researchers and facilities to support the SREL program. To assist during this transition and to allow for the completion of ongoing research grants, UGA requested permission to temporarily relocate selected SREL analytical equipment from Savannah River Site (SRS) to off-site locations. DOE Savannah River Operations Office (SR) has amended the Cooperative Agreement to allow relocation, on a case-by-case basis, of identified SREL equipment. DOE would retain ownership of this equipment. Transportation, maintenance, and management of this equipment would be the responsibility of UGA. DOE-SR has also amended the agreement to raise the DOE ownership threshold on most SREL property from \$1,000 to \$5,000. This was done to allow UGA some additional flexibility in transitioning laboratory activities and to simplify property management activities for both DOE and UGA. The \$5,000 level is consistent with 10 CFR Part 600.134 Equipment. If, as expected, on-site SREL facility and equipment requirements decline, any surplus

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facilities and equipment would be made available to other Site organizations through existing Site programs. For example, SREL plans to vacate three laboratory/office buildings located in B-Area. These buildings and any unneeded DOE equipment would then be made available to other site organizations.

- 2. By January 28, 2008, DOE-SR identify and describe how the extremely valuable, irreplaceable long-term historical data sets created and established at SREL will be preserved, maintained and made available for use by the scientific community.**

We do not anticipate significant changes in how SREL manages its historical data at this time. The SREL program (reference Cooperative Agreement page A-3, Item A.5) will maintain ecological data bases for use by the public, SRS, as well as academic, governmental, and private organizations. Although specific plans have not been finalized by UGA, we believe that the existing SREL library and the geographic information system laboratory will remain at SRS. UGA personnel are currently working with SRS information and security organizations to ensure that SREL faculty and researchers located off-site will continue to have access to site information needed to support ongoing and future research activities.

- 3. Several of the studies (including, but not limited to, Rainbow Bay Amphibian Monitoring, Par Pond waterfowl studies) contributing to these data sets are currently ongoing and have relevance to such energy-related topics as biofuels and global climate change. By January 28, 2008, DOE-SR inform the CAB whether these studies will be discontinued if outside support is not found.**

The items and conditions of the Cooperative Agreement clearly state that DOE funding for SREL research will be project-specific and based upon project need, merit, and funding availability. Therefore, unless new research projects and/or grants are obtained that need the continuation of previous SREL research projects, these studies will not be continued. This would include the Rainbow Bay Amphibian Monitoring and the Par Pond waterfowl studies specifically mentioned in your letter.

- 4. By January 28, 2008, DOE-SR identify what contracting model (broad-based competitive acquisition, direct grants to universities, etc.) will be used to fulfill the research, education and outreach support previously provided by SREL and what the estimated funding will be.**

There is no broad-based competitive acquisition or direct grant proposal specifically designed to replace the "core" funding previously provided to SREL from DOE. As described in the existing cooperative agreement, SREL funding from DOE will be based on project need, scientific merit, and funding availability. Site organizations, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, will continue to work with SREL on joint grant and project proposals. In addition, SR will work with other DOE organizations to explore the possibility of employing SREL expertise to solve environmental problems at

Ms. Patterson

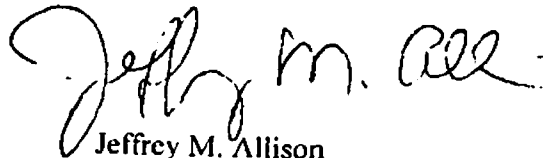
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other sites within the DOE Complex. Finally, DOE and other SRS organizations will continue to support the SREL program by providing site facilities, equipment, and services, as well as access to field research sites.

As requested in your letter, we have distributed copies of your recommendation to the South Carolina and Georgia Congressional Delegations and the University Board of Regents. In addition, we provided them a courtesy copy of this response letter.

Sincerely,


Jeffrey M. Allison
Manager

EQMD-08-008

Enclosure:

CAB Recommendation Letter,
dated 11/28/2007

cc w/encl:

South Carolina and Georgia
Congressional Delegations
Board of Regents of the UGA