



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

**AUG 27 2012**

Dr. Donald N. Bridges, Chairperson  
Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board  
P.O. Box A  
Aiken, South Carolina 29802

Dear Dr. Bridges:

SUBJECT: Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Recommendation Number 291 – Development of Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) Canisters and Research Reactor Spent (Used) Nuclear Fuel (SNF) Shipping Facility and Shipping Cask, Letter, Bridges to Moody, 07/27/12

Thank you for your recommendation regarding the DWPF Canisters and Research Reactor SNF cask and shipping facility. The Departmental response to the recommendations is stated below.

***1. Development of shipping containers for the DWPF canisters and Research Reactor SNF for off-site shipment to a repository.***

The Department is currently evaluating the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on America's Nuclear Future recommendations regarding long-term waste and SNF storage and disposal, and devising an implementation strategy. In order to maximize the synergy between the High Level Waste (HLW) Glass Canisters, the Savannah River Site (SRS) SNF, and other Department of Energy (DOE) facilities, it will be necessary to first make decisions regarding a federal repository for SNF and HLW. These decisions have not yet been made. Therefore, the Department is not considering the development of shipping containers for the DWPF canisters and Research Reactor SNF at this time. As we committed in our June 19, 2012, response to Recommendations 286 and 290, the Department will brief the CAB once the Department's Response is submitted to Congress and will incorporate into the briefing how transportation infrastructure for interim storage and/or disposal will be considered as part of the overall strategy.

***2. Construction of a facility for handling and preparing both the DWPF canisters and SNF for shipment off-site for disposition.***

The Department is currently evaluating the BRC on America's Nuclear Future recommendations regarding long-term waste and SNF storage and disposal, and devising an implementation strategy. Transportation infrastructure, including casks to be utilized, transportation mode, and loading/unloading facilities, are dependent on decisions that have yet to be made and are expected to emerge as part of the overall strategy for storage and disposal. As we committed in our June 19, 2012, response to Recommendations 286 and 290, the Department will brief the CAB once the Department's response is submitted to Congress and will incorporate into the briefing how transportation infrastructure for interim storage and/or disposal will be considered as part of the overall strategy. However, it is unlikely that a joint facility will be capable of handling both the DWPF canisters and the SNF due to the different loading techniques that will be required and the current distance between the storage areas. Therefore the Department is

not considering the development of a facility for handling and preparing the DWPF canisters and SNF for shipment off-site at this time.

***3. Advising the CAB when such actions can be budgeted for and funded.***

The Department's first priority is the safe maintenance and operation of the facilities. When activities are budgeted for future work related to shipments, DOE will advise the CAB.

***4. Explain the process for DWPF canisters and research reactor SNF to be accepted and moved to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) facility.***

The Department is developing an implementation strategy in response to the BRC recommendations. Recommendations related to disposal of HLW and SNF will be discussed and coordinated with local, state, and national stakeholders. At present, WIPP's mission is limited to disposal of defense Transuranic (TRU) waste; therefore, its design and regulatory approvals only support TRU waste disposal. Additional evaluation is necessary to determine whether any technical barriers exist to disposal of HLW and SNF at WIPP.

The Department values the CAB's supportive position of the SRS programs' capabilities and understands the CAB's desires for movement of the DWPF canisters out of the State of South Carolina. The Department also understands the CAB's and the local community's concerns associated with the current lack of a path forward for the disposition of HLW and SNF. However, the Department must move at a pace that ensures any actions taken are done so that the environment and public are safe. As stated previously, the Department is currently evaluating the BRC on America's Nuclear Future recommendations regarding long-term waste and SNF storage and disposal. Once this evaluation has been completed, a strategy for the disposition of HLW and SNF can be developed.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Patrick McGuire at (803) 208-3927.

Sincerely,



David C. Moody  
Manager

NMPD-12-0036

cc:

Melissa Nielson, (EM-3.2), DOE-HQ  
Catherine Alexander, (EM-3.2), DOE-HQ  
Edgardo Deleon, (EM- 22), DOE-HQ  
Mark Senderling (EM-32), DOE-HQ  
Robert King, SCDHEC  
Gwen Keyes, EPA  
Franklin Hill, EPA  
Albert Frazier, GA DNR