



Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board

Risk Management and Future Use Subcommittee

Meeting Notes

March 7, 1996

Augusta, Ga.

The Risk Management and Future Use Subcommittee of the Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) met at 6:00 p.m. on March 7, 1996, at the Landmark Hotel, Augusta, Georgia. Attendees included Vernon Zinnerman, Chairman of the Subcommittee, Lee Poe, Bob Newman, Beth LeMaster, Steve Stine, Deborah Simone, Paul Hagan, Lee Hepner, Dave Christensen, Todd Crawford, Murray Riley, Jesse Hughes, and Sam Booher. Camilla Warren from the Environmental Protection Agency Region IV (EPA-IV) and Danny Hansen from South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) attended; Walt Joseph, CAB Facilitator, also attended. WSRC staff members who attended included Gail Jernigan, Mary Flora, Cliff Thomas, and Rick Geddes. Dave Hepner and Jerry Nelsen were Department of Energy attendees, and Virginia Gardner was the designated federal official for the meeting.

Vernon Zinnerman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for self-introductions from all present. After briefly reviewing the agenda, Vernon turned the floor to Virginia Gardner who gave a status of how the Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation Number 8 is being used. Ms. Gardner explained that the SRS Future Use Project Report has been sent to the Department of Energy in Washington, DC to be included as a site summary in the complex-wide future use report to Congress. The results from the report have also been included in the Baseline Environmental Management Report for the Department. Specifically, the map from the report has been used in development of a "wetlands bank" map and results from the report have been used in the Environmental Remediation strategic plan, called the Management Action Plan (MAP). The Department expects the regulators to have comments on the recommendations on future use and will probably need additional clarification from this subcommittee and the full CAB.

Dave Hepner gave an overview of missions that the Department of Energy is pursuing that will use SRS land and facilities. The group discussed possible ways they could get publicity on their recommendation on future use. Mr. Riley suggested using the Business Network Expo in Aiken in April. Mr. Zinnerman told the group about the new subcommittee of the CAB, the Outreach Subcommittee and his hopes that this group will provide information to the public.

Vernon Zinnerman gave a brief overview of the FY 1998 Budget Prioritization efforts of the subcommittee. Ms. Warren gave the EPA perspective on the budget lists as provided by DOE

and the CAB. EPA "took issue" with both lists; the EPA believes the focus should be on regulatory compliance. Mary Flora distributed copies of the handout "Public Participation in the Fiscal Year 1998 Environmental Management Budget."

There will be one more public meeting on the FY 1998 budget list before the final list is sent to DOE Headquarters on April 15, 1996. Mr. Zinnerman told the group that the subcommittee had focused on future use for the past two years and he hoped the group could now focus on risk and education. He asked Lee Poe to present his vision of a path forward for this subcommittee. (See attached slides and backup material.) Mr. Poe's proposal focuses on risk prioritization and the budget process for fiscal year 1999. Vernon Zinnerman asked that comments on Mr. Poe's proposal be sent to Walt Joseph by March 21, 1996, by telephone at 803-648-5634, fax at 803-648-5692, or email at QUALITYPRT@AOL.COM.

Mr. Zinnerman also said he would like to see experts from the Department of Energy, Westinghouse, EPA, and SCDHEC give their perspectives on risk and risk models. He hopes these models can be used as a tool for budget prioritization for FY 1999. Ms. Warren would like to see the subcommittee continue to work on the definition of risk. By working with the CAB, the regulators may be able to re-evaluate their risk models. The group also expressed their desire to see future use activities become reality. Some said they would like the subcommittee to work with legislative bodies to develop future use activities for the site.

The participants suggested that a tentative schedule with dates be prepared for members of the subcommittee so that they can make plans to attend. Most suggested at least a four month calendar. Mr. Poe asked for two issues to be clarified in these meeting notes: (1) Will there be 2500 workers laid off based on a budget of \$1.2 billion for the site? and (2) Educate the subcommittee on the seismic information that is been in the newspapers lately.

Ms. Gardner announced that a prioritization workshop will be held in May on lessons learned from this year's process. DOE was reminded that people who attend these public meetings usually work during the day and it was suggested that meetings be held at night or after work hours.

Vernon Zinnerman then adjourned the meeting. Information on Seismic Analysis of SRS Canyons Safety analysts at the Savannah River Site (SRS) have just conducted a scheduled review of seismic analysis performed by a SRS subcontractor in 1981 through 1984 on the Site's F and H Chemical Separation Facilities. The Westinghouse Savannah River Company review shows the earlier data did not accurately evaluate the strength of the canyon buildings. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and WSRC are conducting further reviews to determine what corrective measures are needed, if any.

Constructed in the early 1950s, the canyon buildings were built to design standards of the time. The safety review in progress by WSRC involves a complete review of earlier data and a re-analysis of the buildings' seismic capabilities. This review indicates that these facilities may sustain more structural damage than previously calculated in a strong, low-probability earthquake. "The chance of such an earthquake occurring is extremely small, and this new

information does not represent a significant change in risk to public health and safety," said Dr. Mario P Fiori, the DOE Site Manager.

The WSRC engineers now estimate that the facilities are capable of resisting an earthquake that occurs at most once every 1,000 years. Current DOE standards require evaluation of structures for an earthquake that occurs every 2,000 years. Radioactive liquids and solids have been stored in these canyons since the cessation of processing in 1992. The Site is convinced that continuing to stabilize these radioactive materials will even further reduce the risk there is to the public.

These materials have been the subject of an environmental impact statement that recommended last year that the canyons be started up to stabilize these materials for long-term storage. The radioactive materials stored in the canyon buildings include several isotopes of plutonium, neptunium and a mixture of americium and curium. When processing ceased in 1992, approximately 80,000 gallons of solutions containing plutonium remained in the F Canyon. The inventory of plutonium and neptunium materials in the H Canyon is about 15,000 gallons.

The canyon buildings are 835 feet long, 122 feet wide and 66 feet high. Walls are of reinforced concrete and vary from 3.5 feet to 5.5 feet thick. The buildings have heavy shielding and are partitioned into multiple processing sections where all operations and maintenance are performed remotely. They were built to chemically separate uranium, plutonium and other radioisotopes after irradiation in the production reactors at the site.

Note: Meeting handouts may be obtained by calling the SRS CAB toll free number at 1-800-249-8155.