



SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Waste Management Committee

Meeting Summary

May 9, 2000
Aiken Federal Building
Aiken, SC

The Waste Management Committee (WMC) met on Tuesday, May 9, 2000, at 7:30 p.m., at the Aiken Federal Building, Aiken, SC. Attendance was as follows:

CAB Members

Wade Waters*
Georgia Leverett*
Karen Patterson*
Beckie Gaston-Witter*
William Lawrence
Perry Holcomb
Murray Riley
Lola Richardson**

Stakeholders

Bill McDonell
Rick McLeod
Russ Messick
Lee Poe
Mike French
Larry Callair
Jerry Devitt

DOE/Contractors

George Mishra, DOE
Dawn Gillas, DOE
Phillip Prater, DOE
Howard Gnann, DOE
Joe Ortaldo, WSRC
Jack Mayer, WSRC
Mike Griffith, WSRC
Ken Rueter, WSRC
Mary Flora, WSRC
Sonny Goldston, WSRC
Kelly Way, WSRC
Helen Villasor, WSRC

Regulators

Sharon Cribb, SCDHEC

*Denotes committee member

**Denotes absent committee member

Wade Waters opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees and asking for introductions. Mr. Waters noted that if time permitted at the end of the meeting, the draft motions under preparation for the full Board meeting on May 22-23, 2000 would be reviewed.

Defense Waste Processing Facility Canister Storage Environmental Assessment (EA) Update:

Howard Gnann, substituting for Soni Blanco, presented a brief update on the Glass Waste Storage Building (GWSB) Alternative Environmental Assessment (EA). Mr. Gnann explained that by 2005, the GWSB most likely would run out of space; therefore, the Department of Energy (DOE) is currently looking at alternatives.

Issues: The scope of the EA.

- Life of Facility-- Rick McLeod pointed out that according to the EA, the facility would have an operational life of 15 years (because SRS would run out of canisters at that time), yet the facility

is anticipated to be operated for 30 years. What happens in the 15-year interim between the manufactured casks ending date and the life of the storage facility (pads)?

- Liability of Escrow-- Explain the viability and value of the escrow account. How will the risks of a hazardous waste company folding after one year be handled? Joe Ortaldo noted that the evaluation criteria would be comprehensive enough to ensure that a credible company received the contract. Mr. Gnann stated that DOE is assuming that the vendor would be licensed by the appropriate authorities to perform the work.
- Risks and cost--What is the cost to dispose of the casks containing depleted uranium oxide? What are the environmental impacts?
- Ownership--Why did the EA not consider DOE's continued ownership of the uranium? Why can't SRS build casks? Perry Holcomb asked if any consideration had been given to DOE's maintaining ownership of the containers, which would in turn be a cost savings. Mr. Gnann noted that the production of units is a commercial action, not a federal action. The EA does not cover fabrication, disposal, the 15-year lapse, schedule for disposal, or the consequence of continued storage at SRS. Lee Poe noted that it is his belief DOE is attempting to "sell" this alternative action in order to be rid of its uranium problem.

Actions: DOE-SR will share the contingencies with the committee and answer the committee's questions. Mr. Gnann emphasized that the decision-making criteria will be shared with the public and suggested that the committee generate comments and allow DOE to respond. Mr. Gnann stated that while the public comment period closed May 2, and no public comments had been received, DOE would accept and address public comments. Comments will be also be provided by the Committee through its draft motion that will be presented at the full Board meeting on May 22, 2000. DOE-SR will provide Mr. McLeod with information on design details such as pad thickness.

Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (RCRA) Permit:

In response to the Committee's request to be kept informed on issues concerning the WIPP RCRA Part B Permit, Sonny Goldston presented an update on the Transuranic (TRU) Waste Program including the status of proposed modifications. Mr. Goldston also passed out copies of WIPP press releases noting the modifications. At two public meetings being held in New Mexico, two different sets of modifications have been proposed and are now in a public comment period. In Set 1 of the modifications, the changes include accuracy ranges for cresols and pyridine; headspace gas sampling requirements for wastes with no volatile organic compounds (VOCs); and headspace gas sampling for thermally treated wastes. Public comments on Set 1 are due June 11, 2000. However, Mr. Goldston indicated that this modification would have no effect on the site because SRS no longer has TRU waste with VOCs. In Set 2 of the modifications, changes include a three sub-sample requirement for solid waste VOC characterization; miscertification rates that should be on a waste stream basis (a statistical calculation based on historical miscertifications); and substitute radionuclide specific data for gross alpha/gross beta measurements of groundwater. Comments on Set 2 are due June 25, 2000. From Set 2, Mr. Goldston explained how the miscertification rate modification will affect SRS, since the current requirement will force DOE to open an excessive number of TRU waste drums with no significant increase in waste characterization accuracy, but with a significant, and unnecessary increase in risk to the worker's health and safety. Mr. Goldston noted that in an earlier petition to the state of New Mexico, DOE had requested to modify the RCRA Part B permit's TRU waste visual examination requirement from an assumed miscertification rate of 11 percent to one percent. Mr. Goldston also mentioned the CAB recommendations that were sent to DOE Carlsbad earlier requesting changes to the visual examination requirement; however, it was noted that there has not been an official response received to date. While DOE has not requested a change in the initial 11 percent miscertification rate, it is believed that SRS TRU wastes would be classified in the S5000-Debris Wastes Summary Category Group. This requested modification would provide some relief in the number of drums requiring visual examination after the initial inspections.

Issues: What is the accuracy ratio of x-ray inspections on SRS's TRU waste drums; is the x-ray system an assumed failure; can SRS handle Pu-238 drums without additional shielding and substantial funding; and are miscertification rates currently based on any criteria?

Actions: DOE will provide the web address for WIPP RCRA Public Comments in this summary. WEB URL is: [5900wm.htmlhttp://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us/rcradox/rfc/com_menu.thm](http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us/rcradox/rfc/com_menu.thm)

The CAB will develop a draft motion to be presented at the next CAB meeting on May 22-23, 2000 requesting that DOE provide the state of New Mexico with a comment documenting the SRS CAB's support of the requested modifications to the miscertification rate on a waste stream basis; change the assumed miscertification rate of 11 percent to 1 percent as soon as possible; and provide the Committee with written assurance that New Mexico will be asked to classify SRS TRU waste in the Summary Category Group classification as S5000-Debris Wastes.

Disposal of Environmental Restoration (ER) Job Control Waste in E Area:

Phil Prater explained to the Committee that DOE believes it is too early to discuss this process since it had only recently been brought to the attention of SRS regulators. Mr. Prater added that while several options to dispose of this waste are under consideration, it would be premature to discuss any of the alternatives at this time. Mr. Prater requested that DOE be provided with more time to develop an appropriate presentation. Mr. Prater agreed to present this topic to the Committee at its June 27, 2000 meeting.

Suspension of Operations at the SRS Consolidated Incineration Facility (CIF) Draft Motion Review:

After Mr. Waters suggested a review of the CIF draft motion, Howard Gnann noted that he believed this motion is too premature for the May CAB meeting. Pointing out that CIF never had a full mission, Mr. Gnann said that cheaper treatment options are available and DOE is currently evaluating those options. Mr. Gnann noted that DOE was also holding discussions with the state on regulatory requirements regarding the suspension of CIF operations. Mr. Waters pointed out that the last information the CAB had was that the facility started up, became viable, and then the CAB heard that CIF was going to be shut down. Mr. Gnann assured the group that DOE is willing to hold an open dialogue with the Committee and the full Board to answer any questions. Mr. Gnann also emphasized that there is no easy alternative for the treatment of PUREX waste. Mr. Waters requested information on alternative methods for incinerating PUREX. Mr. Gnann responded that while other treatment methods do exist, they are costly. Mr. Gnann added that a Blue Ribbon Committee is looking at options for thermal treatment of PUREX.

Issues: The CAB takes issue with their absence in the discussions and evaluations on suspending CIF operations. Sizing of CIF was too large for just the PUREX stream. If negotiations with the regulators were successful, what would be the possibility of restarting CIF? The date for Maximum Achievable Control Technologies (MACT) Standard compliance needs to be addressed

Actions: Conduct a briefing/workshop in the Aiken area the early part of June to discuss the suspension of operations at CIF. DOE-SR will invite DOE-HQ and the regulators to attend this workshop.

Public Comments:

A request was made to have the High Level Waste program brief the CAB on the Evaporator issue.

With no other public comments, Wade Waters thanked everyone for attending and then adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Meeting handouts may be obtained by calling 1-800-249-8155.