



SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Waste Management Committee

Meeting Summary

July 24, 2000
Sheraton Augusta Hotel
Augusta, GA

The Waste Management Committee (WMC) met on Monday, July 24, 2000, at 7:00 p.m., at the Sheraton Augusta Hotel, Augusta, GA. Attendance was as follows:

CAB Members

Wade Waters*
William Lawrence*
Bill Willoughby*
Brendolyn Jenkins
Lola Richardson**
Karen Patterson**
Rebecca Gaston-Dawson**
Perry Holcomb**

Stakeholders

Rick McLeod
Ernie Chaput

Regulators
None, SCDHEC
None, EPA

DOE/Contractors

Gerri Flemming, DOE
George Mishra, DOE
Larry Ling, DOE
Ray Hannah, DOE
Sonitza Blanco, DOE
Beckie Craft, DOE
Peter Hudson, BNFL
Marcia Birk, WSRC
Mary Flora, WSRC
Kelly Way, WSRC
Mtesa Cottemond, WSRC
Helen Villasor, WSRC

*Denotes committee member
**Denotes absent committee member

Wade Waters opened the meeting promptly at 7:00 p.m. and introduced Mike Schoener, the SRS CAB Facilitator. Mr. Schoener reviewed the agenda for the attendees.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Incidental Waste Ruling: Larry Ling provided a brief update on the recent NRC Ruling on Incidental Waste by noting that for the past three years, the SRS CAB has been asking SRS to report on High Level Waste's (HLW) interactions with the NRC concerning tank closure methodology and the basis for determination. Mr. Ling said that about one month ago HLW received a letter and a staff report indicating that the NRC review was now complete. Mr. Ling said the staff report endorses the actions High Level Waste (HLW) has taken in reclassifying the waste, and from a safety perspective agrees that HLW is doing all it can to protect human health and the environment. However, Mr. Ling said HLW has a concern that there appears to a disconnect between the content of the cover letter and the staff report. Nevertheless, HLW is working to get the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) released for public comment in a month so it can go forward and prepare to close Tank 19. Mr. Ling mentioned that there will be funding in Fiscal Year 2001 to perform the work.

Issues: None.
Actions: None.

Salt Processing Focus Group (FG) Update: During the update of the Salt Processing Focus Group activities, Ernie Chaput, a member of the Salt Processing Focus Group mentioned that for the past year the FG has provided comments that have turned into CAB recommendations or amendments. Sponsored by the SRS CAB, Mr. Chaput said that over the next year, the FG will continue to report on its activities. For example, Mr. Chaput said that SRS has over 30 million gallons of HLW and the site's objective is to put this waste into a glass-like form and send it to the national repository at Yucca Mountain at the earliest possible time. In addition, Mr. Chaput noted that there are regulatory milestones connected with the vitrification of this waste such as removing all the waste from the old style tanks, closing those tanks by 2022, and having all tanks closed by 2028. Mr. Chaput said his own personal opinion is that this is the most important single cleanup problem identified at SRS.

Explaining that there are two types of waste, sludge and salt, Mr. Chaput said two different processes were used to bring these two together. In a system designed to work more efficiently, another process (In-Tank Precipitation (ITP)) combined salt and sludge into one canister. However, since the mid 1990s, that process turned into a safety issue and it was stopped in 1998. Since then, HLW has been analyzing both the problem and a replacement process. The FG was formed to follow HLW activities regarding these activities. Currently, HLW and DOE-HQ are looking at four alternative technologies for selection: ion exchange, solvent extraction, a variation of the old ITP process, and direct disposal of cesium as grout. DOE-HQ expects to make a technical selection by June 2001 and then develop a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). Mr. Chaput indicated that this is both good and bad news. The bad news is that there is already a one-year delay in removing waste from tanks based on the former schedule. Admitting this is a hard decision for DOE to make, Mr. Chaput said it has to be done or there will be more delay in the future which could impact other SRS activities. Speaking on behalf of the FG, Mr. Chaput indicated that the FG believes there is a few years leeway; however, as SRS receives new missions, the FG believes that the call for a contingency analysis is warranted. In closing, Mr. Chaput said that over the next eight to ten months, the FG plans to keep working with DOE and WSRC so it can provide the Waste Management Committee (WMC) with current information. In this way, when DOE makes its decision and goes to the public, the CAB can comment quickly. The FG also plans to continue working to educate the CAB about Salt Processing issues ahead of time, look at funding, and monitor technology development programs and DOE preparations in its decision-making process.

Issues: None.
Actions: The Salt Processing Focus Group will be available to provide continued updates to the WMC.

Consolidated Incineration Facility (CIF) Focus Group Draft Motion Review: A draft motion had been prepared to establish a CIF Focus Group; however, Mike Schoener clarified the process of following the SRS CAB Focus Group Guidelines which uses a Charter Application Form instead of a draft motion.

Citing the excellent work and accomplishments of the Salt Processing Focus Group, Mr. Waters said a focus group is the exact forum the CAB needs to use to identify and work on technical issues regarding the suspension of operations at CIF. Noting that CAB members may lack either time or the technical expertise found in focus groups, Mr. Waters explained that this was the rationale behind the WMC's decision to establish a CIF Focus Group. The SRS CAB has expressed its dissatisfaction with the action DOE has taken to suspend operations at CIF, and following the CAB guidelines for establishing focus groups, Mr. Waters reviewed the charter application form and identified the following persons who have agreed to participate:

Wade Waters - (Administrative Lead)
Bill Lawless - (Technical Lead)
Karen Patterson

Technical Support:
Ray Hannah
Peter Hudson

William Lawrence

Bill Willoughby

Jean Sulc

Perry Holcomb (Technical Lead for PUREX)

Lee Poe

Bill McDonell

Jimmy Mackey

Doug Leader

Sonny Goldston

Public Involvement Support:

Mary Flora

Helen Villasor

Kelly Way

Mr. Waters asked that Helen Belencan of DOE-HQ be added to the list of technical support personnel.

Issues: None.

Actions: None.

Path Forward for Consolidated Incineration Facility (CIF) Draft Motion Review: Mr. Waters reviewed the draft motion for the attendees. The concern of the CAB is the disposal of the legacy PUREX waste; storage capacity for spent PUREX; and the availability of a replacement technology for incineration. Through the draft motion, the CAB is asking DOE to reverse its decision to suspend CIF operations and re-institute necessary funds to continue operation of CIF until DOE can fully justify its decision, and until such time that an alternative treatment option is available. Ray Hannah commented that DOE had factored in reasons such as efficiency and the need to fund higher priority projects for its decision to suspend operations at CIF. Mr. Hannah said it is highly unlikely that DOE would reverse its decision.

Issues: Based on comments to the draft motion received by Rick McLeod, CAB Technical Advisor, and suggestions by the attendees, portions of the draft motion need to be revised, and also to include a date (August 15, 2000) for DOE to respond.

Actions: Rick McLeod and Helen Villasor to make changes as noted.

Defense Waste Processing Glass Waste Storage Building (GWSB) Environmental Assessment

(EA): Soni Blanco provided a brief update on the status of the GWSB EA. The EA outlines the alternative to canister storage that could benefit more than one program.

The original Notice of Intent (NOI) had been issued in July 1999 and a Request for Proposals (RFP) went out March 2, 2000. However, Ms. Blanco noted that a new RFP is being prepared since an option to dispose of the depleted uranium at the Nevada Test Site has been added. Information regarding the environmental and transportation aspects will also be added. Ms. Blanco pointed out that a meeting had been held recently; therefore, a new schedule had not been developed to date. The expectations are that the new EA will be available by the end of the year and will go out for public comment within the next six months.

Issues: None.

Actions: Ms. Blanco to come back and update the WMC within the next six months.

Public Comment: There were no public comments.

Wade Waters adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

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