



SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Nuclear Materials Committee

Meeting Summary

March 27, 2000
Houndslake Country Club
Aiken, SC

The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board (SRS CAB) Nuclear Materials (NM) Committee held a meeting on Monday, March 27, to discuss a recommendation developed to address the by the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) on Recommendation 2000-1 and 94-1.

CAB Members

Tom Costikyan
Ken Goad
Ed Tant
Lane Parker
Brendolyn Jenkins
Charlene Townsend*

Stakeholders

Kim Newell, SCDHEC
Mira Malek, SCDHEC

DOE/Contractors

Charlie Anderson, DOE
Donna Martin, WSRC

*Denotes CAB NM members not present.

CAB Recommendation Development

Tom Costikyan, CAB NM chair, gave a brief summary of a presentation given by Chuck Keilers, DNFSB site representative, on Thursday, March 16. In general, Costikyan explained that the DNFSB is an independent oversight committee that monitors the safety of DOE nuclear weapons facilities. The DNFSB submits recommendations if it believes certain activities require attention. Recommendations 94-1 and 2000-1 were submitted to the Department of Energy (DOE) to address stabilization concerns with nuclear materials left in the manufacturing pipeline when the Cold War ended. The 2000-1 recommendation was submitted to DOE on January 14. This recommendation re-addressed seven SRS items cited in 94-1 that still require stabilization.

In an initial response to the DNFSB, the Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson accepted the recommendation, but not every point listed. Costikyan said the last points of the recommendation suggested that the delay in stabilization activities was a result of funding shortfalls and that the Secretary should inform the President and Congress that the work was not being completed. The Secretary said it did not accept points 10 and 11 because technical uncertainties and changes in baselines, not solely budget shortfalls, contributed to stabilization delays.

Lane Parker, CAB, asked about the plutonium disposition work. Charlie Anderson, DOE-SR Material and Facility Stabilization, said he would give a presentation to the Committee in April about the plutonium work status. He said the work, which involves pit disassembly and conversion, mixed oxide (MOX) fuel fabrication and immobilization of plutonium, is underway now and will probably last through 2018.

Concerning the relationship between the DNFSB recommendations and the plutonium disposition activities, Anderson said the DNFSB recommendations focus only on storage and stabilization of the materials.

A question was asked on the disposition of the highly enriched uranium solutions, first on the list of concerns by the DNFSB. Anderson said although plans were progressing, contracts still needed to be signed by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and DOE of blending the material to low-enriched uranium and providing the material to TVA for fuel. Anderson assured the CAB that once the contract was signed, DOE would have the funding to complete the contract.

On the MOX issue, Parker asked if DOE expected any problems or lawsuits dealing with MOX activities. Anderson said litigation at the reactor sites selected to burn MOX fuel is expected. He pointed out, however, that DOE is pursuing a hybrid approach to plutonium disposition and it could proceed with immobilization of plutonium if MOX activities are held up by lawsuits.

Discussion then briefly turned to the draft NM Committee recommendation. Costikyan stated that the recommendation was a simple recommendation asking for DOE response to the DNFSB's Recommendation 2000-1. Anderson said DOE-SR committed to provide the response, called the Implementation Plan, to the DNFSB in late April. Anderson also agreed with Costikyan that Recommendation 2000-1 was developed primarily to get 94-1 back on track to stabilize the remaining nine milestones.

All agreed it would be inappropriate and pre-mature to ask for information from DOE or the DNFSB until DOE has the opportunity to develop the Implementation Plan and provide it to the DNFSB.

In final discussion, Brendolyn Jenkins, CAB vice-chair, asked about progress of the Nuclear Material Integration (NMI) plan highlighted by Tom Heenan during the CAB Issues Matrix. Anderson said a draft had been prepared and was being reviewed to give to Congress in April. He said the plan looks at all of the excess nuclear materials throughout the DOE complex and where they should be stabilized and dispositioned.

Costikyan said although equity appears to be part of the issue, equity is not achievable when one state is not willing to do its part. Anderson also pointed out that DOE does not have facilities in every state. He emphasized that the NMI is a plan to balance the material burden and override deficiencies some facilities have for stabilizing and dispositioning materials. Anderson said the April 25 plutonium disposition presentation will touch on NMI.

Issues: None

Actions: Gain approval of recommendation and commitment from DOE for a presentation on the Implementation Plan.

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