SRS Citizen's Advisory Board

SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Nuclear Materials Committee

Meeting Summary

July 10, 2000
North Augusta Community Center
North Augusta, SC

The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board (SRS CAB) Nuclear Materials (NM) Committee held a meeting on Monday, July 10, to discuss Revision 3 of the Implementation Plan for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) Recommendation 94-1/2000-1.

CAB Members	Stakeholders	DOE/Contractors
Tom Costikyan	Lee Poe	John Anderson, DOE
Bill Willoughby	Bill McDonell	George Mishra, DOE
Jean Sulc	Mike French	Sachiko McAlhany, DOE
Perry Holcomb	Brandon Haddock	Donna Martin, WSRC
Brendolyn Jenkins*	Pauline Stevens	Allen Blancett, WSRC
Charlene Townsend*	Chuck Keilers, DNFSB	Mike Dunsmuir, WSRC
Lane Parker*		

* Denotes NM Committee members not present

Introduction

Tom Costikyan, CAB NM chair, opened by introducing John Anderson, DOE-SR Acting Assistant Manager for Materials and Facility Stabilization, who came to speak on Revision 3 of the Implementation Plan for the DNFSB's Recommendations 94-1/2000-1. Anderson said he would discuss changes that have occurred since DOE's original 94-1 Implementation Plan was released. DOE-SR is achieving final stabilization of plutonium by repackaging the material into the DOE standard 3013 container. Anderson then displayed a model of a 3013 and explained that it is basically a can within a can with the outside can as the boundary. A plutonium button or plutonium oxide could be placed in the 3013. The material will not come in contact with plastic, when the plutonium was placed in a plastic bag, then placed into a can similar to a food can. The 3013 container meets a 50-year storage capability.

Mike French, public, asked about the incidence of the inner can of a 3013 leaking and contaminating workers. Anderson said a hole in the weld was not detected. Air got inside of the container, the plutonium metal oxidized and contamination occurred. Since that incident, the bagless transfer process was reviewed and improved through quality assurance measures. A check after the point of welding is also performed. All of the 3013 containers have been inspected since the September 1999 incident.

One of the major features of the original 94-1 Recommendation was the Actinide Packaging and Storage Facility (APSF). Anderson said this facility was a high tech, robust facility intended to store SRS and Hanford material. The facility was suspended in January 1999, however, because DOE named SRS as the preferred site for the plutonium missions and the function of the APSF needed to be reevaluated. As a

result of a study, DOE concluded that the APSF was not needed. Instead, DOE is now planning on stabilizing and packaging plutonium in 235-F to 3013 requirements, then storing it in 235-F and K Area Material Storage (KAMS). The APSF had the ability to fire oxide to the 3013 standard and to package.

Anderson explained that the K Area Materials Storage (KAMS) facility recently renovated would be coupled with 235-F to support the storage needs. Phase I of KAMS was completed in January 2000, with Phase II scheduled for completion in December 2000. Hanford material will remain at Hanford until later in the schedule. Because the plutonium missions are now planned for SRS, Anderson said there is no need for a 50-year storage capability. Mike French asked about how the 50 metric tons of excess plutonium would be stored. According to Anderson, SRS will not get all of the material at one time.

Anderson then reviewed a chart that showed the various materials remaining to be stabilized, the projected dates for stabilization and the final disposition path. Anderson said the most significant delays occur with activities related to the renovation of 235-F. The chart showed a wide cost range and schedule for the three related stabilization activities. Once the conceptual design is completed, those ranges will narrow he said.

The first schedule given to the DNFSB included optimistic projections for construction and operation of the APSF, Anderson explained. Since then, DOE has implemented project management improvement. Rather than setting specific dates early in the schedule of enhancing 235-F, the contractor is giving DOE a range of dates. Stabilization of plutonium metals and oxides will be impacted by revised strategy of renovating 235-F.

Concerning the operation of the canyons, Anderson said work in F Canyon should be completed by 2004, but some of it will remain available to conduct the americium/curium work. H Canyon will operate longer.

Chuck Keilers, DNFSB site representative, said neither canyon should be shut down while DOE conducts its complex wide sweep of identifying materials requiring stabilization in the canyons.

Tom Costikyan asked when new schedules were attributed to budgetary delay as opposed to technical delays. In March 2000, Anderson said DOE-SR and HQ reprioritized funding at SRS to provide the necessary funding for 94-1. Keilers said realignment of funding is not necessarily a given because Congress has to approve the reallocation.

Another situation Anderson pointed out was the delay in the blend down of highly enriched uranium to be sold to the Tennessee Valley Authority for use as fuel in commercial reactors. He added it was important that the agreement be signed by August 2000 in order to conduct certain pre-blend down work. Keilers suggested that DOE could put more money into the TVA program to expedite the contract. TVA must get contractors in line to be ready to accept the material.

After Anderson's presentation, Keilers provided brief insight on the DNFSB's initial thoughts on the IP. He said the Board is trying to understand why the schedules at SRS are 4 to 5 years past all other work in the complex. When 94-1 first came out, DOE stated it could stabilize most of the materials within an 8-year timeframe. Now one of the caveats to conduct stabilization activities is having the $48 million budget realignment for SRS approved.

Concerns with the stabilization of the HEU solutions is top on the DNFSB list, primarily due to the fact that signing of the agreement has taken over a year, and it still is not signed. Keilers attributed the continuing delays to economic issues. Keilers also reviewed the list of activities and the delays associated with each.

Lee Poe, public, asked why the HEU solutions were considered top on the priority list to stabilize. Keilers said the material is stored outside the canyon, close to workers. Some of the material is also stored in less robust single shell tanks and is susceptible to precipitation until it is refreshed.

In comparing the difference between 94-1 and 2000-1, Keilers said 94-1 focused on schedule while 2000-1 focused on budget. Sachiko Mcalhany said in the recent Revision 3 of the IP that DOE-SR increased its commitments from 9 to 30 commitments.

Lee Poe said he has read extensively about the potential of other materials coming to SRS for stabilization. Anderson and McAlhany both emphasized the 94-1 commitment would take priority over stabilization of any other materials. Keilers added that 94-1 strongly recommended that the canyons not be shut down until DOE determined if they are needed to stabilize other materials.

In final business, the attendees discussed what could comprise a recommendation. Most agreed that a CAB recommendation urging DOE and TVA to solidify an agreement for the HEU would be worthwhile, since the agreement was being delayed primarily by economics.

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