



SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Nuclear Materials Committee

Meeting Summary

November 13, 2000
North Augusta Community Center
North Augusta, SC

The SRS Citizens Advisory Board Nuclear Materials Committee met on Monday, November 13, 2000, at 7 p.m. at the North Augusta Community Center. The following were in attendance:

CAB Members

Tom Costikyan
Lane Parker
Bill Willoughby

Stakeholders

Don Montiak

DOE/Contractors

Dawn Haygood, WSRC

Bill Willoughby provided a brief presentation regarding the agreement between DOE and the Tennessee Valley Authority for TVA to take SRS blended down uranium, noting the agreement has still not been signed. The Interagency Agreement approval by TVA is on hold pending an investigation of a leaking lead use assembly. During a fuel inspection on October 29, 2000, at Sequoyah, a highly enriched uranium lead use assembly (LUA) gave indications of a leaking fuel rod. The decision was made to discharge all four LUAs until more definitive inspections could be performed. A video was taken of the leaking LUA which showed a slightly raised tube indicating the problem is potentially due to debris but a manufacturing defect could not be ruled out at this point. Mr. Willoughby did not know from where the leaking rod had originated. TVA is presently reviewing manufacturing details and inspection information for any indicators of potential problems. TVA plans to determine a path forward by mid-December. DOE and TVA have agreed to preliminary design of the blend-down facility at SRS, however no contracts to begin construction will be signed until the agreement is signed. Based on the current program schedule, this will not significantly impact the overall program and project unless the agreement is delayed past April 2001.

Don Montiak of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League asked several clarifying questions about how the Board became interested in this topic, what are the Board's concerns, how much highly enriched uranium is at SRS, and what was the original TVA agreement schedule. Tom Costikyan and Bill Willoughby addressed each of Mr. Montiak's questions noting that the delay in the signing of the agreement is what had gained the Board's attention and the fact that alternative arrangements for disposal of the blended down uranium may need to be explored. Mr. Montiak discussed DOE's need to conduct better contingency planning and also noted that DOE makes plans and never follows through. He also inquired about the purview of the Board's activities. Mr. Costikyan explained the SRS CAB is not chartered to provide advice regarding defense programs.

Mr. Willoughby also discussed interim storage of plutonium noting ongoing discussions between the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board and DOE. Mr. Willoughby stated that DNFSB is satisfied that the residues are protected for short term storage. Tom Costikyan noted the SRS CAB's concern for worker safety and said he expects a better understanding in January. Mr.

Montiak stated that if disposition is delayed then recasting plutonium with one percent gallium is an option since it stabilizes plutonium so it does not oxidize as rapidly.

Mr. Montiak also asked general questions about the Americium/Curium project to which Mr. Costikyan stated he was not aware that a decision had been made. He also inquired about canyon utilization. Mr. Costikyan explained that the annual budget for operating one canyon is \$150 million and when the site has a better idea of the materials coming here DOE can then decide which one to shut down.

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

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