



SRS Citizen's Advisory Board

April 2001 Meeting Minutes

SRS Citizens Advisory Board

April 23-24, 2001
North Augusta Community Center
North Augusta, SC

Members Present

David Adcock
Meryl Alalof
Nancy Ann Ciehanski
Beckie Dawson
Gerald Devitt
Mel Galin
Ken Goad
Perry Holcomb
Vera Jordan
William Lawrence
J.G. Long
Jimmy Mackey

Karen Patterson
Maria Reichmanis
Lola Richardson
Murray Riley
Heather Simmons
Jean Sulc
Bill Vogeles
Wade Waters
Carolyn Williams
William Willoughby

Ex-Officio Representatives

Julie Corkran, EPA
Tom Heenan, DOE
Jim Brownlow, SCDHEC

SCDHEC - South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control
DOE - Department of Energy

Board members Walter Becker, Sallie Connah and Brendolyn Jenkins were unable to attend. The meeting opened with Tom Heenan serving as Designated Federal Official. Mike Schoener served as facilitator. The meeting was open to the public and posted in the *Federal Register* in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Approval of the Minutes

The Board approved the January draft meeting minutes with no changes.

Key Decisions Made During the Meeting

The Board provided comments on the DOE Public Participation Policy and provided a letter to Secretary Abraham regarding the 2002 budget. The Board also endorsed an SSAB Chairs letter to Secretary Abraham as well.

Recommendation 137-Salt Processing Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The Board recommended that DOE select a preferred salt processing technology by July 1, 2001 and comply with the current NEPA schedule of having a Record of Decision available by September 2001.

Recommendation 138-High Level Waste Tank Closure Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The SRS CAB recommended that DOE complete the EIS by May 2001 and provide a schedule to expedite HLW tank closure activities.

Agency Update

Tom Heenan announced that SRS has approval to ship transuranic waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant. He invited CAB members to attend a media event on May 8 to celebrate the departure of the first trucked shipment. He also announced that Karen Patterson, Perry Holcomb and Lee Poe have been appointed to the Alternative Incineration Subcommittee of the Environmental Management Advisory Board. Mr. Heenan also provided the Operations Update, which contained new information regarding the Nuclear Materials Program (see attachment). He also introduced Mark Frei, DOE Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Project Completion.

Public Comments

Sam Booher of Augusta, Ga. commented that the squeaking wheel gets the grease. He stated that one issue seldom brought before the board is the National Environmental Research Park. He noted his concern for the natural environment at SRS, stating the CAB is involved in many issues, however this one never receives attention. He asked the CAB to please keep in mind the many environmental issues that don't generally cause problems.

Jimmy Mackey announced that the Environmental Remediation Committee had changed its name to the Environmental Restoration Committee.

SRS Budget Presentation

Mark Frei, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Project Completion discussed the Environmental Management (EM) 2002 budget (see attachment). He noted he was here for two days of discussion regarding execution of the 2002 budget and planning for the 2003 budget. Mr. Frei began by quoting Assistant Secretary Carolyn Huntoon who stated that EM is a national issue, not a state issue and that everyone will have to work together. He commented on the challenge with which DOE is faced. The DOE overall budget request went down from 19.6 to 19.2 billion dollars. The EM budget is 5.9 billion, twenty percent of which is budgeted for closure. The majority of the budget (\$4,355 million) is for defense ER&WM, he said. Non-defense EM, which includes sites such as West Valley and Weldon Spring, is budgeted at \$216 million. Uranium facilities budgeted at \$344 million and defense facilities closure budgeted at \$977 million comprise the remainder of the EM budget request. The EM2002 budget request total of \$5.9 billion is down from \$6.3 billion requested in FY01.

Mr. Frei emphasized that the highest priority focuses on protecting the health and safety of public and workers addressing high-risk activities first. He stated that compliance will be a challenge and cleanup work will be deferred while higher risk priorities are addressed. Mr. Frei noted the following highlights for FY2002:

- Increased funding for the Hanford Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant to \$500 M
- Fully fund Rocky Flats and Fernald to \$954 M to maintain site closure schedules
- Ship nearly 1500 cubic meters of TRU waste to WIPP to meet Idaho Settlement Agreement milestone
- Fund all high-risk nuclear materials stabilization activities, including both canyons at SRS and the Plutonium Finishing Plant at Hanford
- Fully fund spent nuclear fuel operations at Hanford, Idaho, and SRS
- Continue operating the Defense Waste Processing Facility at SRS
- Complete the Weldon Spring Remedial Action Project and transition to long-term stewardship

- Begin construction of Salt Processing Plant at SRS and initiate conceptual design of the full-scale plant

The President's budget request for SRS is \$1,468 million for FY2002, which is down from \$1,618 million in FY2001. Mr. Frei discussed the SRS budget summary by program and noted the following planned accomplishments:

- Maintain activities for high-risk nuclear materials and all DNFSB requirements
- Produce 150 canisters of vitrified high level waste at DWPF
- Ship up to 600 cubic meters of transuranic waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant
- Complete receipt of plutonium from Rocky Flats
- Complete stabilization of Rocky Flats plutonium scrub alloy and Hanford alloys
- Stabilize 350 kilograms bulk of plutonium residues and 80 units of metal and oxide
- Receive 33 casks of foreign and 21 casks of domestic research reactor and spent nuclear fuel
- Complete construction and begin operation of melt and dilute technology demonstration facility
- Select a preferred alternative technology for removal of cesium from tank waste in support of Salt Processing project
- Begin construction of the Salt Processing pilot plant and initiate conceptual design of the full-scale plant
- Complete remediation of five release sites
- Complete all currently planned F-Canyon dissolution campaigns and initiate orderly, safe stand-down of PUREX operations

Board Chair Karen Patterson expressed dismay that this budget scenario is grinding everything to a halt and noted that materials will still be at risk. She expressed desire to see more funding come to SRS emphasizing that SRS has the bulk of high level waste cures within the complex. She stated that the stakeholders have waited patiently for many years as work has been deferred and their patience is gone.

Wade Waters questioned TRU shipments to WIPP remarking that by SRS accepting Mound TRU waste, SRS was to be given the privilege of shipping twice as much waste as we receive. With a transportation exemption approaching, he questioned if there is enough money to receive Mound and begin shipment prior to exemption. Mr. Frei responded yes, DOE believes SRS can afford to move out twice as much as Mound will move in and not lose the exemption window.

Board members expressed further concerns regarding layoffs and the potential to lose core employees if there is a reduction in force. Board members also commented on statements by Robert Nelson that the federal government should abandon nuclear waste cleanup programs and expressed concern over the fact that the Environmental Remediation Program is taking the largest hit from a \$118 million program to \$46.5. A final question asked how you can reduce funding from 46 million to 4 million for the Plutonium 235-F project and expect success.

Facilitator Update

Mike Schoener presented the current recommendation status report noting 20 recommendations are pending, 21 are open and 95 are closed. The Board is awaiting three responses from EPA, one from SCDHEC and one from DOE. There have been five status changes in the recommendation database since the January meeting, he said. Mr. Schoener also requested CAB members sign up for committee participation. Mr. Schoener discussed a letter regarding CAB comments on DOE's Public Participation Policy (see attached) and obtained Board approval to provide these comments to DOE.

Waste Management Committee Report

Consolidated Incineration Facility Focus Group Update

Bill Lawless provided a Consolidated Incineration Facility (CIF) Focus Group Update (see attached). He provided background information noting that the Focus Group believes that CIF should be operated until an alternative is found. He stated that the key issue is that time is running out and April 2, 2002 is an important decision date. Budget, closure plan activity and the CIF alternative technology study schedule all factor into the decision whether to restart CIF. If it is not to be restarted, then the facility must be dismantled in 180 days at a cost of approximately \$80 million, he said. He emphasized that a proven technology alternative must be in place before this happens. There are 37,000 gallons of PUREX waste in storage and an additional 100,000 gallons slated for future disposal. SRS is mandated to treat half the legacy waste by 2009. Dr. Lawless discussed the alternative treatment technologies being considered and provided examples of stabilization technology. He noted regulatory challenges and discussed DOE-Headquarters' response to the CIF Focus Group recommendations and request for stakeholder involvement. Dr. Lawless concluded his presentation with the following concerns:

- DOE-HQ appears to be moving away from incineration
- An SRS decision is due to regulators by April 2, 2002 and time is running out
- No closure plan is currently under development
- The availability of funding if a dual track to restart and alternative technology selection is required
- The integrity of stabilization process wasteform disposal is in question in terms of stewardship

The CIF Focus Group will meet on May 7 and draft several motions for the July CAB meeting encouraging SRS to find a solution before April 2, 2002.

Salt Processing Alternative Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Larry Ling provided an update on the Salt Processing Supplemental EIS noting the scheduled public meetings.

Wade Waters presented a draft motion regarding the Salt Processing EIS recommending that DOE select a preferred salt processing technology by July 1, 2001, and that DOE comply with the current NEPA schedule for the project and have a Record of Decision available by September 2001. The motion also recommended that DOE meet all regulatory commitments to high-level waste tank closures. Following clarifying questions, Mel Galin moved the Board adopt the recommendation and Beckie Dawson seconded. The motion passed with 18 members in favor and two abstentions. Karen Patterson abstained due to conflict of interest and Vera Jordan abstained due to lack of knowledge regarding the issues related to this topic.

Burning of Paper Pellets as Alternate Fuel

Don Gordon, WSRC, provided a presentation regarding the burning of paper pellets as alternate fuel co-fired with coal in A-Area boilers (see attachment). Mr. Gordon discussed the composition of the pellets, which are shaped into cubes and consist of used office paper, cardboard and plastic bags. Other waste, such as food waste, hard plastics, tires and spray cans can not be used in paper pellets. Mr. Gordon described the paper pellet process. He also discussed the benefits of this process including reduced disposal in landfills; reduced air emissions and ash volume; and disposal of SRS documents onsite, improving security posture. Mr. Gordon discussed economic considerations, regulatory options and discussed the chronology of the SRS request to SCDHEC for approval to burn paper pellets in the A-Area Boiler. He concluded that that the proposed alternate fuel initiative makes good environmental and economic sense and that the regulatory framework allows for permitting the project without imposition of requirements that can not be met or are so financially unattractive as to prohibit consideration.

Board members asked questions regarding cost of recycling materials, volumes of paper burned at the A-Area Boiler, if any other facility could utilize this process, and if the site had any experience burning wood pellets. It was suggested that surplus pellets could be sold to municipalities and noted there is a market for ash as well.

High Level Waste Tank Closure Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Beckie Dawson presented a draft motion regarding the HLW Tank Closure Draft EIS (see attached). The draft motion recommended that DOE maintain the current DEIS schedule without any further delays and that DOE expedite the HLW tank closure activities. It also recommended that DOE avoid any activity that may incur new and unexpected delays with the Federal Facility Agreement closure schedule. The Board modified the motion to recommend that DOE complete the EIS by the end of May 2001 and that DOE provide a schedule for expediting HLW tank closures. Bill Voegel moved the Board adopt the modified motion and Ken Goad seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 17 members in favor and one abstention by Karen Patterson due to conflict of interest stating that the company she works for is responsible for writing the EIS.

Strategic & Long Term Issues Committee Report

Mel Galin presented a draft letter to Secretary Abraham regarding the SRS budget (see attached). Following several editorial changes to the proposed letter Bill Voegel moved the Board send the letter to the Secretary and Beckie Dawson seconded. The letter was approved unanimously with 19 members in favor.

Public Comments

Trish McCracken, Augusta, Ga., expressed concern about the Nuclear Regulatory Commission relationship with SRS. She noted she has received no information about public meetings held by NRC.

Susan Bloomfield, Augusta, Ga., commended Board members for volunteering. She noted her initial involvement with Board working group and having led the original member selection team. She stated she was interested in a letter the CAB is sending to Secretary Abraham and stated she wished the CAB had heard from the public before it was approved. She commented on how the SRS mission has shifted from production to cleanup and now back to production noting how priorities have shifted. She commented that money is going to the plutonium factory that could be returned to cleanup.

Don Moniak, Aiken, S.C. commented that he is not a plant to create the perception of community opposition to the plutonium plant, as the Mayor of Augusta had referred. He stated that he thought the CAB was making a mistake with the letter to Secretary Abraham, which is missing key information. He commented that groundwater protection is not on list. Mr. Moniak cautioned against referring to the institutional sense of CAB since many decisions are made by separate set of individuals. Mr. Moniak stated that if you're not going to fight for tougher cleanup standards then you're not going to get the money you deserve. Cutting corners on cleanup to save a few bucks should be added to cost of Cold War, he said. The issue of what is driving this (budget reductions) is totally missing. Mr. Moniak stated that Robert Nelson is a divisive force in this country noting how he refers to nuclear welfare and is making statements based on no information. Mr. Moniak stated we don't need these people around. He commented that George Bush lost the popular vote and is walking around like he won by a landslide. Mr. Moniak stated that we have to make a statement. He commented that money for the plutonium facility is going to France because that is where the design team is. It's not coming to SRS but to the Chicago office, he said and wondered how many people are aware of this. Mr. Moniak asked how many Board members are not from the Aiken Augusta area and stated that according to some then they didn't count, they were outsiders. He emphasized that the MOX Plant is an international program and the CAB needs to take a stand against it and is obligated to revisit this issue. He stated that in CAB Recommendation 63, the Board recommended that these facilities be sited here. He emphasized that there is no disposition path for MOX fuel and no storage path. Mr. Moniak also invited CAB members to a public meeting, (see attached flyer). Mr. Moniak also commented that the CAB should use its ad space more efficiently and asked why the public was not made aware of a Monday training session in the advertising.

Mary Drye, Augusta, Ga., asked if the CAB is aware of all the issues Mr. Moniak presented. (The Board affirmed that they are aware of these issues.)

Strategic & Long Term Issues Committee Report continued

Mel Galin provided a committee update noting they had decided to close Recommendations 120 and 121. He also noted committee review of the facility disposition program and the need for the full Board to hear this presentation. Jean Sulc provided a brief update of the Long Term Stewardship Subcommittee noting the progress of the subcommittee. She also stated that DOE plans to use Chapter 8 of the Comprehensive Plan for stewardship planning. The subcommittee will review Chapter 8 and provide comments, she said. Mel Galin also announced that Bill Vogeley will Vice Chair the Strategic & Long Term Issues Committee.

Mr. Galin introduced Shayne Farrell, DOE, to discuss the SRS prioritization process noting that a workshop was held in late March. Mr. Farrell emphasized that the workshop was a simulation of what the SRS personnel had been through and was very informative for the stakeholders. A similar process was demonstrated by Dave Nolan, WSRC, using Expert Choice Software. The Analytic Hierarchy Process is the method of prioritization used. Mr. Nolan discussed the scale for pairwise comparisons and then walked the CAB through a comparison using the software.

Nuclear Materials Committee Report

Margie Schwenker, DOE, provided a presentation regarding the Highly Enriched Uranium Blend Down Project/Program (see attached). She noted the benefits of the program including transferring DOE surplus off-spec HEU for beneficial use in the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) power reactors. This is the most cost effective means to dispose of material and DOE and TVA will share in investment costs and savings. Ms. Schwenker discussed the interagency agreement between DOE and TVA, which covers 33 metric tons of off-spec HEU that will be processed and down blended to low-enriched uranium. Four lead test assemblies in Sequoyah successfully demonstrated the use of off-spec material from 1999-2000. The Interagency Agreement was signed by Secretary Abraham on February 8, 2001 and by TVA on April 6, 2001, following a three year effort. Ms. Schwenker provided a program status noting that the Safety Analysis Report for Packaging for the LEU shipping container was submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for licensing by the TVA contractor. She discussed operational interfaces and a project cost and schedule summary. The project is on schedule not only to meet DNFSB 94-1/2000-1 commitments but also for providing disposition of SRS off-spec HEU materials. Board members questioned funding for the project, ownership of the LEU, packaging and transportation.

Environmental Restoration Committee Report

Jim Heffner, WSRC, provided an Environmental Monitoring Program Overview (see attached). The Environmental Monitoring Program began in 1953 and program drivers include state and federal regulations, DOE orders and best management practices. SRS impacts on the environment are well known. In 1999, 12,000 samples were collected and 30,000 analyses performed. Various environmental media are sampled including ambient air, rainwater, sediment, vegetation, deer and hogs, turkey and beavers, fish, soil, surface water, groundwater and food products. Mr. Heffner discussed contaminant pathways and then focused more specifically on the air monitoring program. Air sampling stations are spread out geographically according to the SRS wind rose. Mr. Heffner discussed atmospheric tritium releases from 1954-1999 and releases at several specific surveillance points. Mr. Heffner discussed tritium in the rainfall and provided a comparison of 1999 radiological air surveillance. He discussed air pathway dose, which was .06 mrem in 1999. The standards allow for 10 mrem of dose. Mr. Heffner noted the difference in radionuclides attributing to dose from 1998 to 1999, noting the dominant dose contributor shifted from tritium to emissions from coal piles. He also showed doses from a decade glance and then from the beginning of site operations, which emphasized minimal doses to the public. Mr. Heffner concluded noting that the air monitoring program meets regulatory requirements and reliably monitors

emissions. Doses are small, but calculable and monitoring results agree with those from SCDHEC and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Board members questioned the impacts of phytoremediation and will it increase doses. Mr. Heffner responded that SRS is confident that no more than 500 curies will be released from the trees. Questions and comments also revolved around drinking water standards issued by EPA, SCDHEC's monitoring program (which is smaller but parallel to SRSs) and extensive health effects studies being conducted regarding individual dose.

EM SSAB Letter and Chairs Trip Report

Karen Patterson noted a letter from the EM SSAB Chairs to Secretary Abraham (see attached). She asked that any Board showstoppers be provided to the Board Administrator by the end of the week. She also provided a brief SSAB Chair trip report. The meeting included a tour of Yucca Mountain and the Nevada Test Site and a two-day meeting regarding SSAB administrative issues.

Administrative Committee Report

Lola Richardson provided a committee update noting an Administrative Committee meeting will be held May 21 from 3-5 p.m. in conjunction with the Combined Committee meeting in Savannah. She also noted that the next issue of the "Board Beat" is being printed and informed the Board of recent Speaker Bureau activities. Ms. Richardson also provided an SRS CAB budget update (see attached).

Public Comments

Karen Patterson, Aiken, S.C. stated she was providing comment on behalf of stakeholders unable to attend the meeting and noted that at a public meeting regarding immobilization, stakeholders told NRC they should do a better job of communicating to the public about the MOX process. She noted that some stakeholders think the CAB is the appropriate venue for these communications, however the SRS CAB is not chartered to consider the siting of the MOX facility. She stated that NRC and DOE should determine a method to communicate with the public.

The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m. with Tom Treger acting as Associate Deputy Designated Federal Official.

Handouts

SRS CAB Agenda, April 24, 2001
Operations Update, April, 2001
FY2002 Budget Overview, Mark Frei, DOE
Draft Letter to Darwin Morgan from SRS CAB, dated April 24, 2001
SRS CAB Recommendation Summary Report
Consolidated Incineration Facility Focus Group Update, Bill Lawless
Salt Processing Alternatives Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Wade Waters, CAB
Burning of Paper Pellets as Alternat Fuel Co-fired with Coal in A-Area Boilers, Don Gordon, WSRC
HLW Tank Closure Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Beckie Dawson, CAB
Draft Letter to Secretary Abraham, dated April 24, 2001
Russia's Nuclear Troubles, A Public Meeting, Don Moniak, Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
Highly Enriched Uranium Blend Down Project/Program, Margaret Schwenker, DOE
Environmental Monitoring Program Overview for the Citizens Advisory Board, Jim Heffner, WSRC
Environmental Management Site Specific Advisory Board letter to Secretary Abraham, dated April 19, 2001
SRS Citizens Advisory Board Fiscal Year 2001 Budget Summary

SRS CAB Calendar
SRS CAB NEPA Monthly Report

For copies of meeting handouts call 1-800-249-8155.