SRS Citizen's Advisory Board

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Waste Management Committee

Meeting Summary

July 23, 2001
Holiday Inn Coliseum
Columbia, SC

The Waste Management Committee (WMC) of the Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) met at the Holiday Inn Coliseum, Columbia, SC on July 23, 2001. Attendance was as follows:

CAB Members	Stakeholders	DOE/Contractors
Wade Waters*	Lee Ann Henry	Ray Hannah, DOE
Bill Willoughby*	Leslie Minerd	Larry Ling, DOE
Beckie Dawson*	Ruth Thomas	Gerry Flemming, DOE
Meryl Alalof*	Rick McLeod, CAB Tech Advisor	Don Gordon, WSRC
Gerald Devitt*		Sonny Goldston, WSRC
Perry Holcomb*		Teresa Haas, WSRC
William Lawrence*		Kelly Dean, WSRC
Karen Patterson*	**Regulators**	Helen Villasor, WSRC
Vera Jordon*	Keith Collinsworth, SCDHEC	
Heather Simmons*		
Mel Galin		
Marty Stringer		
Murray Riley		

***Denotes members of the WMC**

Wade Waters opened the meeting promptly at 7:00 p.m. by inviting introductions and thanking everyone for coming. Mr. Waters then recognized the newer members of the Board who have recently joined the WMC and welcomed their participation on the committee.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

High Level Waste Program Update

Larry Ling opened his presentation by providing a brief overview of the HLW system for the new members. Mr. Ling then discussed the Salt Processing Project Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) status and emphasized that the Notice of Availability was filed with the

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and announced in the *Federal Register* on July 20, 2001. Mr. Ling said that Caustic Side Solvent Extraction had been identified in the FSEIS as the preferred alternative to process the salt stream at SRS. A Record of Decision (ROD) is scheduled for August 2001.

Mr. Ling noted that research and development on the Salt Project will continue. Plans are for Westinghouse Savannah River Company (WSRC) to design, construct and operate a pilot scale facility to demonstrate caustic side solvent extraction. DOE plans to award two contracts through conceptual design in order to stimulate competition, DOE-HQ will issue the Record of Decision, and contracts are scheduled to be awarded by the end of the year for the design, construction, and operation of the full-scale facility. Plans are for the pilot facility to be constructed during FY02, with the Salt Processing Facility becoming operational no later than 2010. When asked about costs, Mr. Ling stated that the projection is from $800M to $1.2B.

Mr. Ling then continued with his presentation by discussing the leaks in Tanks 5 and 6. Briefly outlining the different styles and designs of the tanks, Mr. Ling said that both Tanks 5 and 6 are the old style Type I tanks. Mr. Ling showed pictures of the leaks and outlined the sequence of events leading up to each of the leaks. Tank wall inspections have identified six leak sites in Tank 6 (with the lowest leak site at 129 inches) and fifteen leak sites (with the lowest leak site at 31 inches) in Tank 5. The current level of Tank 6 is 124 inches, below the lowest leak site, and the current level of Tank 5 is 123.6 inches. The liquid in Tank 5 above the lowest leak site will be transferred out in late July. Explaining tank inspection methods, Mr. Ling said that camera inspections are required before and after any tank transfer as a result of the Tank 6 issue. Pointing out that the leaks occur because of stress from the nearby weld seams, Mr. Ling explained how the salt dries at the pinhole leak site and plugs the leak. When asked if there were preventative measures in place to prevent these leaks, Mr. Ling responded that there are none. Mr. Ling did say that there was an active chemistry program, which would help extend the life of the tank. Mr. Ling also reminded that group that these tanks are approximately 50 years old, and that inevitably more leaks should be expected. Mr. Ling then explained ventilation piping in the annulus and how hot air is piped into the annulus in order to promote drying in the annulus.

Mr. Ling continued with a discussion of the evaporators and said the evaporators are used to reduce the total amount of liquid in the tanks. The newest evaporator, 3H, is impacted by leaks in the cooling coils of the drop tank, Tank 30. Some sealant was placed in the Tank 30 coiling coils, which seem to be working. The 3H Evaporator is operating better than expected and gained approximately 300 thousand gallons of space in the last month. The current plan is to convert tank 37 to a drop tank for this evaporator.

While the 2H Evaporator is shutdown because of the buildup of solids in the pot, it is expected to be back in service by fall 2001. The 2F Evaporator is currently operating and gaining about 80 thousand gallons of space per month. Mr. Ling then showed comparison photographs of the 2H Evaporator before and after cleaning.

Explaining the ongoing effort to recover the former In-Tank Precipitation (ITP) tanks for tank farm service, Mr. Ling said that Tank 49 currently contains 200 thousand gallons of solution from ITP demonstration runs. Mr. Ling pointed out the benzene problems with the old ITP process, and said that the benzene has now been reduced to acceptable levels and modifications have been made to tie 49 into the H-Tank Farm transfer system. Tank 49 is scheduled for tank farm service in fall 2001. Another tank assigned to ITP, Tank 50, is currently being used as a receipt tank for Effluent Treatment Facility (ETF) bottoms. It is scheduled for tank farm service in August 2002. Ray Hannah interjected that Saltstone is scheduled for start up in May 2002. Mr. Hannah clarified that the way to gain tank space is to disposition the material in the grout.

Mr. Ling then continued with an update on the Glass Waste Storage Building and the alternative that DOE had been studying. Mr. Ling said that DOE has determined that the alternative would not

be cost effective since it would require additional canister tanks. When Saltstone becomes operational, Mr. Ling said the material in Tank 50 can be turned to handling in addition to the uncertainties related to the disposal of depleted uranium. Subsequently, work on the Environmental Assessment has been suspended. DOE is currently evaluating other options, such as modular buildings.

Mr. Ling concluded his presentation with charts of the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) canister performance to the end of the program and said that to date, 1145 cans have been produced. Mr. Ling discussed the Federal Facilities Agreement that DOE has with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and EPA in which tank closure dates are outlined. DOE and SCDHEC are considering a plan to change the closure dates for Tanks18 and 19 so that these two tanks could be closed together since closing two tanks at the same time is a more cost effective approach. DOE is also evaluating the closure of the 1F Evaporator, which sits in the middle of the 4-pack.

Paper Pellets

Wade Waters introduced Don Gordon and said that Mr. Gordon would be providing a presentation on the paper pellet project to the full Board at its meeting the next day. Mr. Waters explained that the WMC had heard several presentations on the paper pellets and had even developed a draft motion, which was terminated at an earlier WMC meeting since SRS had reached an agreement in principle with SCDHEC. Mr. Waters commended Mr. Gordon for working closely with the regulators to achieve the agreement.

Consolidated Incineration Facility (CIF) Closure Schedule Alternatives

Wade Waters, motion manager for this draft motion, discussed the background information and the reason why the WMC believed this was an important draft motion. With the April 2, 2002 decision date to either close or restart CIF fast approaching, Mr. Waters said that while DOE may have several promising technologies identified by then, it was highly unlikely that any would be functional by that date. Mr. Waters emphasized that the overriding interest of the CAB is to see that the PUREX waste is treated.

A member of the public asked why CIF had been shut down if there were no other treatment paths to dispose of the PUREX. Ray Hannah explained that one of the waste streams targeted for CIF (benzene) had disappeared and SRS was left with only one remaining waste stream (PUREX); therefore, it was more cost effective to find another treatment path.

After much discussion on how the draft motion should read, it was agreed that changes to the recommendation portion would be made before presenting the motion to the Board the next day.

Status of Low Level Radioactive (LLW) and Mixed Waste (MLLW) Shipments

Heather Simmons, draft motion manager provided the background on the LLW and MLLW waste shipments and how they were derived. Ms. Simmons focused on the different RODs and the Transportation Environmental Assessment (EA) that made it possible for SRS to begin shipping LLW and MLLW offsite. Noting that there is still a huge inventory of LLW and MLLW at SRS that needs to be disposed, Ms. Simmons said that the draft motion was recommending that SRS ship 13 large containers of LLW to the Nevada Test Site, and 1,800 drums of MLLW to a commercial site in Utah by September 30, 2001 or earlier if possible. The motion also recommended that SRS identify the type and quantity of waste that needs to be shipped off-site in Fiscal Year 2002 and present the anticipated time schedule to the CAB by October 23, 2001.

Highlighting the letter the CAB had sent to Secretary Abraham concerning the 2002 budget, Ms. Simmons said that the offsite shipments of LLW, which cannot be disposed at SRS, was specifically targeted as requiring adequate funding. There were no suggested changes to the draft motion before its scheduled presentation to the Board the next day.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Wade Waters adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.