SRS Citizen's Advisory Board

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Strategic Initiatives Committee Meeting Summaries

Sheraton Augusta Hotel, Augusta, SC
February 24, 2003

The Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Strategic Initiatives (SI) Committee met on February 24, 1:00 p.m., at the Sheraton Augusta Hotel, Augusta, SC. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and comment on the proposed Savannah River Site (SRS) 2004 budget, the Performance Management Plan (PMP), the accelerated clean-up and hear public comment. Those in attendance were:

CAB Members

Mel Galin*
Bill Vogele*
Jean Sulc*
Meryl Alalof
Donna Antonucci
Jennifer Barrington
Leon Chavous
Gerald Devitt
Mary Drye
Perry Holcomb
Bill Lawless
William Lawrence
Wendell Lyon
Darrly Nettles
Harold Rahn
Murray Riley
Ann Dalton
Wade Waters

*Members of the SI Committee

Stakeholders

Sam Booher
Ernie Chaput
Mike French
Jay Bassett, EPA
Kelly Hunter
Eric Williamson
Rich Smalley

DOE/Contractors

John Pescosolido, DOE
Jim Buice, DOE
Steve Baker, DOE
Alice Doswell, DOE
Becky Craft, DOE
Bill Taylor, DOE
Karen Hooker, DOE
Gerri Flemming, DOE
Keith Wood, WSRC
Teresa Haas, WSRC
Mary Flora, WSRC
John Dickenson, WSRC
Joe Carter, WSRC
Susan Cathey, WSRC
Kim Cauthen, WSRC
Peter Hudson, BNFL
Tiajuana Cocknauer, USDA
Dan Becker, WSRC
Dawn Haygood, WSRC
Kelly Way, WSRC
Paul Sauerborn, WSRC
Jim Moore, WSRC

Mel Galin, Chair, welcomed those in attendance and asked them to introduce themselves. Mr. Galin invited the new CAB members to join his committee. He requested that they be sent three documents:

The Environmental Management Executive Summary for the 2004 budget.
The budget highlights
The remarks by Secretary Abraham

Mr. Galin turned the meeting over to the facilitator, Mike Schoener.

Mr. Schoener reviewed the three topics to be discussed and requested that questions be held until after the presentation.

Savannah River Site 2004 Budget
John Pescosolido, DOE-SR Chief Financial Officer, explained that he is responsible for the development of the budget at the site. He explained that he would be doing an over all budget review but a handout was provided of backup detail with budget amounts.

The SRS Congressional Budget Submittal for fiscal year (FY) 2004 is $1,812 million. This amounts to 14 percent over last year. Environmental Management (EM) is the largest component at $1,295 million. The other components are: Defense Programs at $236 million, Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation at $81 million, Safeguards and Security Program at $156 million, and Other Programs as $44 million.

Mr. Pescosolido reviewed the planned accomplishments in FY 2003 and FY 2004.

Mr. Pescosolido went on to review the Performance Management Plan (PMP). A Top to Bottom Review Team issued a report in February 2002 with recommendations to address each of the concerns and outline a Cleanup Reform Vision. A series of public meetings was held to obtain feedback/comments. The PMP was published in August 2002. The Cleanup Reform Vision is to accelerate completion of the site's EM mission. It will reduce the cost of cleanup by $8 to $12 billion, shorten cleanup schedule by 15 years or more, and eliminate EM health, safety, environmental and security risks in half the time. It is planned that SRS will be transformed fully to a National Security Site.

The FY 2004 budget request fully supports the PMP objectives. At the site, the project management concepts to support the PMP objectives have been fully instituted with focus on accountability for achieving results. Key PMP interim end states and dates were reviewed with the completion of EM cleanup being 2025.

The path forward is to continue supporting the Secretary's management assessment and Accelerated Cleanup Vision but not rest on our laurels. The site will continue to relook and refine as necessary contract acquisition strategy and the contract incentive. There will remain a high level of cleanup momentum with a focus on cost effectiveness and productivity improvements.

Mr. Pescosolido explained the Gold Metrics that are the performance measures for the PMP. If the Gold Metrics were 100 percent completed, it would mean that 100 percent of the EM mission would be complete. He presented an example of the charts that are available for each matrix.

Mr. Galin thanked Mr. Pescosolido for the briefing and stated that it is important that DOE and Westinghouse Savannah River Company (WSRC) bring budget information to the CAB in a timely manner.

The following are some of the questions and comments during the discussion period:

Question: In technology development there is a decrease in budget dollars. What does that mean?
Answer: While funding is not as large for technology, the funding for technology was transitioned to other areas with stronger interest in technology. One-half of the EM technology funding was transferred to the Office of Science and Technology. The programs are best equipped to drive technology. There is a defacto responsibility of technology from the national level to the programs.

Question: Eluding to Plutonium (Pu) Oxides in the Gold Metrics, when Pu Oxides are placed in the 3013 canisters and stored in K-Area or 235F and the site gets down to zero, is the material still at SRS or has it been shipped?
Answer: The material is in storage at SRS and ready to be shipped. The Life Cycle Plans show the transfer from EM to the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) with the material still at SRS. EM has said that they are responsible to get Pu to safe interim storage. The EM mission is not defined as going as far as total disposal.

Comment: Didn't understand some of the comments in Paul Golan's letter related to baselines and risk analysis.
Answer: The site had developed baselines but not in all areas. The picture continues to improve and we feel the Gold Metrics has resolved these problems.

Comment: The Pu being shipped from Rocky Flats to SRS is an EM responsibility. Some of the Pu has no disposition path. I don't want this three tons of material being shipped from other sites to SRS with no disposition path.
Answer: We are currently working on a disposition path. Some will be Moxible and some may go to H Canyon.

Question: With H Canyon scheduled down in 2012 and several tons of Spent Nuclear Fuel from the research reactors, with no Melt and Delute, there is no disposition path.
Answer: The current disposition path shows (1) In the PMP, Yucca Mountain is scheduled to come up in three years, (2) Spent Nuclear fuel will be co-disposed of to Yucca Mountain and (3) Past 2010, EM will transition to another DOE Department and they will continue to look for pathways.

Comment: Would feel better if the Department would look at a disposition path sooner. They previously did not approve of co-disposal.

Answer: There are numerous assumptions in all of this that the national policy will have to change. Regulators will need to approve. This will be a fundamental change for the regulators.

Question: Aqueous PUREX is showing disposal in 2004. I thought it was to be disposed of this year.
Answer: The disposal of legacy aqueous PUREX starts in 2003.

Question: What's the status of Tank 50?
Answer: We are working with the regulators for resolution.

Comment: The 2003 target for Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) canisters is 130. That is down from past years.
Answer: Yes, due to the DWPF melter being down. The melter should be back up mid-April.

Question: What's the status on the closure of the next two tanks in 2004?
Answer: We are proceeding to get the two tanks ready for closure, but we will then have to wait for the States guidance. Due to the lawsuit, the State doesn't want to authorize tank closures if the lawsuit says different. The lawsuit goes to court in May.

Question: When SRS closes the four-pack, what will happen to the evaporator?
Answer: There are no plans to do anything with the evaporator.

Question: What is the status of the Salt Waste Processing Facility?
Answer: $50 million is in the 2004 budget for design. The operating date is 2008.

Accelerated Cleanup Status
Mike Schoener, facilitator, explained that a slide would be posted for each major program at the site. The site would like input and comments on how the site can accelerate the accelerated cleanup. The site would like high level comments from you in each of the areas. Due to time constraints about 15 minutes was allotted for each area. The public comments were placed on flip charts. There was no attempt to answer questions or comments, only record them for future use. Mr. Schoener said that the site will come back in March at the CAB meeting with a review of the results.

Alice Doswell, DOE, thanked Mary Flora for pinch hitting for Fran Williams who was not able to make the meeting. Ms. Doswell stated that the site having developed the PMP with accelerated cleanup, is now looking to see if there are ways the site can do things even quicker. How can we do it differently? Can we tie initiatives together? The PMP is the baseline in which we can now try to accelerate further.

Mary Flora reviewed each of the objectives of the major programs in the PMP. The emphasis was to receive comments and input on what the public felt was important and what they felt the site needed to focus on accelerating. The goals in the PMP were very aggressive but they are not static. The site is going to continue to improve via technologies and new ways of doing work. We need your input.

The following are the comments received:

High Level Waste (HLW):

- Cesium removal could be technical roadblock. Need more dollars applied to this issue.
- Consider / make good use of "waste on wheels" concept.
- Consider including evaporator when closing first four pack. Speed-up closure of 1-F Evaporator.
- Identify bottlenecks / obstacles to accelerating clean up and get public input on it.
- Any new mechanisms for monitoring safety while accelerating clean up?
- Transfer of Americium/Curium (Am/Cm) – Sludge Batch 3 – accelerate vitrification of this batch because of Am/Cm.
- Explore increasing cesium; ensure cesium Waste Acceptance Criteria (WAC) for Saltstone is being met.
- Use HLW tank about to be closed for another waste / end state? Grout other waste in the tanks as they are closed.
- Annulus cleaning plans for tanks. We haven't seen this in the PMP.
- Close HLW tanks – reaffirm public support for expediting tank closure.
- Local vendors need access to participate. (Access to the PMP)
- Waste Incidental to Reprocessing (WIR) – how can you move forward if WIR prohibits? What
- is the contingency for the WIR lawsuit?
- Does the budget drive the process for HLW closure or does the process drive the budget? From a dollar standpoint, what is controlling?
- Continue research for clean up of contaminated areas. Find better technologies.
- How will technologies continue to be funded to clean-up contaminated areas?
- How realistic are we that the proposals can be accomplished?
- Where does Savannah River Technology Center (SRTC) fit in to the technology process? How will technologies continue to be funded to support accelerated clean up?

Nuclear Materials:

- What happens to funds if F-Canyon closes earlier?
- How sure are we that F-Canyon deactivation is a workable plan? How good is planning for just in time? Will it work? Confident?
- Need more public involvement. More factual information to the public. Increase education on the perceived risks.
- What is the timeline between deactivation and decommissioning?
- F-Canyon deactivation is related to H-Canyon. Think and integrate what the site is doing with both canyons.
- What is the long-term plan for F-Canyon?
- Transitioning responsibility for orphan Plutonium (Pu) from Rocky Flats and transferring to National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). How can the public be involved in NNSA issues?

- DOE – Facilities in F-Canyon area are needed. – Make sure funds aren't pulled just because EM doesn't want a facility. Address long term disposition of all materials on site. Approved disposition paths are needed now.
- Potential impact of Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication (MOX). Some position has to be taken.
- Has management considered the effects of the changes on employee anxiety levels?
- What is the cost if the site can't take the Spent Nuclear Fuel "just-in-time"? How confident are we in "just-in-time"? What are the contingency plans?
- Are we looking far enough ahead to anticipate needs of deactivating F-Canyon?
- Talented technical people will be hard to retain at the site.
- "Consolidate Complex-wide Plutonium to SRS for storage, pending disposition." Is this a CAB position or a site position? Need to rethink consolidation of materials due to security issues of late.
- If F-Canyon is deactivated, then look at accelerating closure of other facilities as well. Use an area approach as opposed to facility approach.
- Need to address long term disposition of all materials on site. (Ultimate disposition)
- Do we have an approach to consolidate Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) into one basin? What is the contingency plan if we can't take SNF?

Solid Waste:

- Need emphasis on disposition of PUREX, particularly from a technology standpoint.
- Recommendation accepted by all complex CABs (Site Specific Advisory Boards) on containers. Transuranic (TRU) waste is important.
- Yes to all four issues for TRU waste. We need to take advantage of excess containers. Need to address regulatory definition of TRU waste. The Public needs education on the Hub concept.
- WAC – Is it too stringent for Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP)?
- If we increase the size of containers, can we mobilize and use them?
- The emphasis on shipping low activity TRU waste isn't a good idea. – Emphasis should be on shipping high activity waste first.
- Don't remember seeing an analysis on why we ship low-level TRU waste to WIPP. Should we question that?
- If Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) will not support new shipping containers; a new shipping mechanism is needed.
- May need to build new containers to clear regulatory hurdles with the Department of Transportation before you fund new containers. Work with regulatory constraints.
- What is the thought process on accelerating clean up costs as compared to closing CIF costs?
- What does accelerated clean up do to regulatory costs?

Soil and Groundwater:

- Have an overall plan for different zones – ex. Buffer zones. How clean is clean in the buffer area and concentrate on the buffer area.

- Legal aspects of regulators - laws have already been passed by Congress. Relationship/coordination between DOE and regulators is required regarding what we can leave behind.
- Interim Actions are a band-aid approach. Don't spend much time on interim actions.
- Question of end states depends on visions of future. How clean is clean? Outside uses such as the future Energy Park need to be brought into discussion of end states.
- Update inventory of site plans and missions to include NERP.
- NERP – Have a park involved in research. Consider endorsement of NERP.
- Make maximum use of core team that involves regulators and SRTC.
- Use more risked-based approach work with regulators. Could use a more liberal use of mixing zones.
- What can we coordinate with the regulators?
- Find a way to do it right the first time. Don't focus on interim approaches.
- Need an overall concept of industrial zones, mixing zones and buffer zones.
- Changes in water standards. – What are the impacts of changes – laws, regulatory standards, etc.

Facility Decommissioning:

- Don't make the assumption that the site boundary will be the same.
- Who has the last word on what is decommissioned? How is determination made? Is one group over the entire long-range plan?
- Agree to perpetuate NERP. NERP should be fixed in stone.
- Focus on risk not reducing footprint.
- Decommissioning should be based on cost as well as risk. Also look at lifecycle cost. – Can $10 to 20 billion be saved by tearing down buildings? How do you relate risk, schedule and costs?
- Can risk be reduced by removing source term rather than by Decontamination and Decommissioning (D&D)?
- End State Plan – Involve CAB and stakeholders. D&D is the #1 issue with the CAB in 2003.
- What are the D&D drivers? Regulatory? Risk reduction? What?
- Is cost effectiveness an on going long term cost savings consideration?

Other Acceleration Considerations:

- Carolina Bays – Protection of; overall status; recovery of; presentation on Bays request for a CAB meeting.
- Unstable environment. Lobby efforts-focus on Senators for budget.
- We should be careful in shutting down good broad capability facilities such as H-Canyon until we make sure they aren't needed. The Energy Secretary indicated that there is a new initiative to look at the potential to process spent commercial nuclear fuel. This could require the use of H-Canyon.
- What should be done with facilities that support both EM and non-EM missions, e.g., SRTC, Central Lab, Regulatory Monitoring & Bioassay Lab, H Canyon & HB Line, etc.
- Do DOE and WSRC have plans to expand Fran William's group? More staff is needed.

- There is an integrated project schedule in the PMP. However, the CAB needs a critical path analysis to see how to maintain schedule and risk reduction.

Other:

Mel Galin stated that CAB Recommendation #157 was placed in the handouts so that new CAB members would have an idea of the substance of the CAB presentations.

With no further comments, Mr. Galin adjourned the meeting.

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

The following are the action items from the meeting:

- Mel Galin requested that we mail to all the new members a copy of: - Jim Moore
    - The Environmental Management Executive Summary for the 2004 budget.
    - The budget highlights
    - The remarks by Secretary Abraham

- Come back to the CAB in March to give an update on the PMP and the accelerated clean up. – Site Representatives
- Bill Lawless requested that a presentation on Carolina Bays be given to the CAB in the future. - Paul Sauerborn