



SRS Citizen's Advisory Board

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Nuclear Materials Committee Meeting

**Aiken Municipal Conference Center, Aiken, SC
July 11, 2005**

The SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Nuclear Materials Committee (NMC) met on Monday, July 11, 5:30 PM, at the Aiken Municipal Conference Center, Aiken, SC. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the Proposal for a Limited Pu238 Mission, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) Second Annual Report to Congress on Plutonium Storage at SRS, the Status of NM Recommendations, and to hear public comment. Attendance was as follows:

CAB Members

- Jerry Devitt
- Karen Patterson
- Perry Holcomb
- Art Domby
- Joe Ortaldo
- William Willoughby
- Jean Sulc
- Robert Meisenheimer
- Leon Chavous

Stakeholders

- Bill McDonell
- Murray Riley
- Wade Waters
- Russ Messick
- John Contardi, DNFSB

DOE/Contractors

- Kevin Smith, DOE
- Nick Delaplane, DOE
- Randall Ponik, DOE
- Gerri Flemming, DOE
- Jay Ray, DOE
- Phil Breidenbach, WSRC
- Charles Nickell, WSRC
- Joe Carter, WSRC
- David Burke, WSRC
- Sonny Goldston, WSRC
- Teresa Haas, WSRC
- Lyddie Broussard, WSRC

- NM committee members

Welcome and Introduction

Jerry Devitt, NMC Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM, and encouraged full public participation. He then opened the floor for the first topic on the evening's agenda.

Proposal for a Limited Pu238 Mission, Phil Breidenbach, WSRC

Phil Breidenbach began his presentation with the background of the Pu238 that is presently located at the Hanford site. He explained that the Pu238 in question was made at SRS and sent to Hanford in the 1960s for experiments that were never conducted. Upon cancellation of the experiments, the 12 drums of material were placed in retrievable storage. He said the DNFSB had raised concerns about the stability and proper storage of this material. Subsequently, a variety of options have been evaluated and it appears that SRS is thought to be the most viable and cost effective.

Mr. Breidenbach explained that the material is very similar to those that are processed in H Area today and what was processed in the past. According to Mr. Breidenbach, the primary reason SRS is considered an attractive option is the fact that it has the facilities and experienced personnel in H Area to handle this material where it was originally made. He stated that the material in question was considered a low assay oxide that is proposed to be processed in HB-Line. It is approximately 15% Pu238 with the balance being

other constituents including Pu239. If the mission were approved, he said the plan would call for dissolving the material and running it through the chemical processes.

According to Mr. Breidenbach, the proposed plan called for inspections to be performed at Hanford to verify drum integrity prior to packing each drum into an overpack container for shipment to SRS. Upon receipt, the material would be taken directly to HB-Line for just-in-time dissolution to eliminate the need for interim storage. Mr. Breidenbach said this proposed mission could be performed without any negative impact to other SRS disposition efforts or a significant generation of waste. Additionally, Hanford would pay approximately \$8 million for retrieval, transportation, and stabilization efforts.

In response to concerns about the programmatic need for the material, stakeholders were told that while initial contact on the use for the material had been made, a DOE decision is not expected until next year. Mr. Breidenbach was asked if Hanford could do this work for themselves and he explained that they did not have the facilities to stabilize this material. When asked about alternatives for the material, Mr. Breidenbach explained that if no programmatic need were identified, an alternative would be to dissolve the material and send it to a sludge batch for handling through the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF). He fielded other questions in regards to shipping and processing schedules but he reminded the committee that since this mission is still pre-decisional, some of their questions couldn't be answered at this time.

Stakeholder Led Discussion of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) Second Annual Report to Congress on Plutonium Storage at SRS

Karen Patterson opened the discussion of this report that was issued in June 2005 and distributed to the committee members. She brought up several points of interest including that the DNFSB states in their report that they believe it will be cheaper to build a new facility rather than modify an existing one. She stated that she would like the committee to pursue this as a topic for a future meeting.

She asked Kevin Smith if funding had been approved for the proposed Pu Vitrification Facility. He responded that as of today, it had not yet been approved.

Status of NM Recommendations, Jerry Devitt, NMC Chair and Karen Patterson, NMC Vice Chair

Jerry Devitt asked if there was any discussion on potential recommendations.

In regards to the Pu238 presentation, Perry Holcomb asked the committee to consider taking a position that supports the appropriate use the SRS facilities to handle the miscellaneous small quantities of nuclear materials that may be found in the DOE Complex. He said to do so would show good stewardship and that DOE should use these facilities to do the job it needs to do.

Ms. Patterson said the committee would draft a recommendation in regards to the Pu238 mission in time for the July CAB meeting.

Public Comment

Mr. Devitt asked for any other public comment and with none, he then adjourned the meeting at 6:40 PM.

For additional information or meeting handouts, call 1-800-249-8155.

Follow-Up Actions

1. Question by Perry Holcomb: "Is Pu239 which is 15% Pu 238, (both as oxides not metals) critical under any circumstances?" (Responsible Party: Randy Ponik/Lyddie Broussard) COMPLETE

2. Question by Karen Patterson. "What is the charter and membership of the Nuclear Materials Disposition and Consolidation Coordination Committee?" (Responsible Party: Randy Ponik/Lyddie Broussard) COMPLETE
3. Question by Murray Riley: "For material coming back from Hanford to H area to process, how will the financing be paid – when it is shipped or when it is received?" (Responsible Party: Randy Ponik/Lyddie Broussard) COMPLETE
4. Request by Karen Patterson. "The DNFSB states in their report that they believe it will be cheaper to build a new facility rather than modify an existing one. We want more information on this. (Responsible Party: John Contardi/Lyddie Broussard)