

Recommendation 351  
Savannah River National Lab Funding

**Background**

With over 1,000 people on site, the Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) is the applied research and development laboratory at the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS). "The laboratory applies state-of-the-art science to provide practical, high-value, cost-effective solutions to complex technical problems. The laboratory earns its world-class reputation because of its talented people and their unwavering commitment to safety, security and quality in the delivery of technology solutions that work."<sup>1</sup>

The research and knowledge gained at SRL is available to the whole EM complex, the lab is focused on national challenges, from cyber security and safety, to bringing together the best science and technology available to clean-up legacy cold war waste. Additionally, the lab is the nation's holder of tritium expertise. Tritium is a key component in national defense. With only a twelve-year-half-life, the ability to produce and maintain tritium is essential. The lab is also home to a mobile plutonium facility that is capable of recovering weapons grade nuclear materials anywhere in the world.

The lab is also pushing the current boundaries of advanced manufacturing and radiation detection. For example, the lab has GrayQB technology which makes radiological contamination visible. Recently, the evaporator in the HLW tank farm suffered a leak. Using this technology, the lab was able to pinpoint the leak on imaging, saving valuable budget dollars in keeping the HLW team from a continued search of the leak.

Funding for the lab is primarily found from their customer service. Customers from a host of agencies and locations pay for the site's expertise, and as such, the lab does not have base funding. This lack of funding puts the lab at a disadvantage to other labs, who enjoy base operational funding. If the lab did receive federal dollars for base funding, it could help further the reach of the lab and keep operations stable.

**Recommendation:**

The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board recommends that the Department of Energy:

1. Work with the Savannah River National Laboratory to evaluate how direct base funding from the federal budget for stability purposes could be requested and established, and evaluate the lab to determine what budget projections would be needed for base funding.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://srnl.doe.gov/about/excellence.htm>