



Recommendation No. 120

March 28, 2000

FY 2001 Budget Deferment of Infrastructure Activities

Background

The President's FY 2001 Department of Energy (DOE) budget request containing the proposed Savannah River Site (SRS) budget was released to the public on February 7, 2000. Jim Buice, Department of Energy-Savannah River (DOE-SR), presented the SRS FY 2001 budget to the SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Strategic and Long Term Issues Committee on February 22, 2000 and again on March 27, 2000.

The SRS FY 2001 budget request is \$1,642 million versus \$1,512 million for FY2000, an 8.6 percent increase. This budget will allow SRS to meet regulatory agreements, maintain progress toward meeting the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board commitments, continue study and preliminary design for salt processing technology, meet all tritium recycle commitments, and support receipt and storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel. With this budget, SRS can begin TRU waste shipments to WIPP and support plutonium disposition missions. However, this budget will only support infrastructure activities that are deemed crucial with no extra monies available for other identified infrastructure restoration projects. Over \$5 million specified for infrastructure restoration project improvements and upgrades were deferred from the FY 2001 SRS budget.

Two infrastructure projects make up the deferred program funding. One project is the upgrade of the 50-year-old electrical distribution system at SRS. The other is the upgrade and replacement of the SRTC main facility ventilation system. These activities require \$2.6 million each to be implemented and make up the \$5.3 million that was deferred. Both of these projects have gone through conceptual design and DOE validation. They are ready to be implemented if the funding was available.

Comments

The SRS CAB has been concerned about the continual deferral of needed infrastructure improvements in the SRS budget for several years. In the past six years, the total infrastructure budget has been reduced from between \$60-\$80 million a year down to a recent level between \$10-\$15 million a year. At this funding level, the SRS CAB believes that SRS can only maintain the current infrastructure while making improvements or implementing new activities for only the most critical projects. Currently, over \$200 million exists in backlog for small projects (under \$5 million) and over \$600 million in backlog for large projects (over \$5 million).

The SRS CAB does recognize that some major accomplishments in the infrastructure area have been made. These include the new sewer and water main treatment facilities and the replacement of all major site bridges. However, many additional projects are required and include process upgrades to the SRTC waste collection and transportation system, replacement of roofs on many of the 130 administrative buildings, and intra-area upgrades and improvements to the water and sewer distribution system. The SRS CAB would like to see a stable and consistent long-term budget strategy for infrastructure improvements, consequently it supports a 10-year infrastructure restoration project request for between \$370 - \$380 million at rate of \$37 - \$38 million per year.

In addition, the SRS CAB believes the infrastructure programs at SRS are a foundation for long range planing and use of the site. New missions and divestment to industrial privatization will be hindered if antiquated infrastructure is not upgraded or replaced. The SRS CAB is also concerned about the safety aspects of continuing to use out dated 50-year-old equipment and not replacing needed ventilation systems. There is the concern that current site programs and production facilities could be impacted if there were infrastructure system failures. The SRS CAB believes it is difficult for infrastructure projects to compete with site programs and production facilities when it comes to the SRS budget ranking. Infrastructure at the site needs to be viewed the same way as infrastructure is for a small town of 15,000 people with industrial facilities or as a self-supported university campus. Infrastructure is vital to the continual existence of SRS and the carrying out of its major responsibilities. It is likely that long term costs for emergency repairs will total more than the cost of a planned program for infrastructure upgrades and repair.

Recommendations

In light of the comments above, the SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) recommends that DOE-Headquarters:

1. Reinstate the \$5.3 million in the FY 2001 budget for the two infrastructure restoration projects.
2. Establish the 10-year \$380 million stable long-term budget strategy for infrastructure improvements.
3. Reevaluate the budget ranking system for infrastructure programs.
4. DOE-SR brief the SRS CAB on the impacts of the activities that would be deferred if additional funding were not provided.

References

1. Buice, Jim, February 22, 2000, presentation to the SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Strategic and Long Term Issues Committee, SRS FY 2001 Budget.

Agency Responses

[Department of Energy-SR](#)