



Recommendation No. 137

April 24, 2001

Salt Processing Alternatives Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Background

The Notice of Availability for the Salt Processing Alternatives Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) appeared in the Federal Register on March 30, 2001. Based upon the 45-day review period the public comment period ends May 14, 2001 (Ref. 1). The Salt Processing Focus Group has been requested by the Waste Management Committee of the Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) to review the SEIS and provide specific written comments to DOE by this date. Public meetings to discuss and receive oral comments are scheduled for May 1, 2001, at the North Augusta Community Center in North Augusta, South Carolina and for May 3, 2001 at the Holiday Inn Coliseum in Columbia, South Carolina (Ref. 2).

The Salt Processing Focus Group was formed three years ago to evaluate the process used by SRS to select salt processing alternatives and to examine in detail the four alternatives (Ref. 3). The SRS CAB expected that a decision would have been made by now. Two years ago, the SRS CAB provided comments during the scoping meetings for the SEIS and voiced its desire to solve the salt disposition issue expeditiously (Ref. 4). In January of 2000, the SRS CAB stated its position that a timely and cost effective solution to salt processing was of critical importance and that DOE select a preferred salt waste processing technology at the earliest date possible (Ref. 5). DOE agreed that a timely and cost effective solution was of critical importance and went on to state that removal and stabilization of liquid waste in its aging tanks is a regulatory commitment and one of the highest priorities at SRS (Ref. 6).

Five months later (May 2000), the SRS CAB requested assurance that any schedule slippage in selection of the preferred salt processing alternative not affect HLW tank space needs, regulatory commitments, or other SRS activities. In this recommendation, the SRS CAB stated that the main focus of DOE is to select a salt processing alternative technology as quickly as possible (Ref. 7). DOE's response stated that the main focus was toward selection and deployment of a technology for salt processing as quickly as possible. DOE explained further that the HLW salt processing at SRS was one of the highest priority and visibility projects within the DOE complex (Ref. 8).

Comment

As the current DOE schedule dictates, the SRS CAB expects to see a final SEIS by the second quarter of this year (2001) and a final Record of Decision (ROD) concerning the salt processing alternative in the third quarter. This means that DOE needs to establish a clear direction and reach a final decision on the issues surrounding salt processing technology within three months. The SRS CAB wants all regulatory commitments met.

Recommendation

The SRS CAB recommends that DOE:

1. Select a preferred salt processing technology by July 1, 2001.
2. Comply with the current NEPA schedule for the Salt Processing Project and have a ROD available by September 2001.
3. Meet all regulatory commitments related to HLW tank closures.

References

1. Notice of Availability, Salt Processing Alternatives Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Federal Register Volume 66, Number 62, March 30, 2001.
2. Savannah River Site Salt Processing Alternatives Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact

- Statement (DOE/EIS-0082-S2D), March 2001.
3. Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation No. 69 (adopted November 17, 1998), "Selection of HLW Salt Disposition Alternatives".
 4. Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation No. 81 (adopted March 23, 1999), "High Level Waste Salt Disposition Alternatives to the In-tank Precipitation Process Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement".
 5. Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation No. 112 (adopted January 25, 2000), "Selection of HLW Salt Processing Alternative".
 6. DOE response to Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation No. 112, Rudy to Loadholt, February 25, 2000.
 7. Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation No. 112 - Amended (adopted May 23, 2000), "Selection of HLW Salt Processing Alternative".
 8. DOE response to Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation No. 112 - Amended, Rudy to Patterson, June 15, 2000.

Agency Responses

[*Department of Energy-SR*](#)