



Recommendation No. 138

April 24, 2001

HLW Tank Closure Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Background

The Waste Management Committee of the Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) provided public comment on the High-Level Waste (HLW) Tank Closure Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) last month (Ref. 1). The Salt Team Focus Group developed the comments per a detailed review. The comments addressed several inconsistencies in the DEIS, suggested minor revisions and offered clarifications on other points of interest. However, the primary point stressed in the comment letter was the need to maintain the current HLW Tank closure schedule. Any deviation in the Federal Facility Agreement closure schedule would be unacceptable to SRS stakeholders.

The SRS CAB has consistently voiced this same concern and believes that HLW Tank closure is one of the most important activities at SRS. This is evident by the numerous recommendations concerning the HLW Tank closure process. The SRS CAB first recommended to DOE that it initiate the HLW Tank closure process by developing prescribed closure criteria in 1996 (Ref. 2). Four years ago, the SRS CAB provided support to close the entire four-pack (tanks 17, 18, 19, and 20) (Ref. 3). In 1999, three years ago, the SRS CAB was provided a commitment by DOE to finish the HLW Tank Closure EIS by December 1999 (Ref. 4 and Ref. 5). However, in November of 1999, the SRS CAB was informed that the EIS would not be released in December. A recommendation was made to DOE to expedite the release of the EIS and expedite the closure of tank 19 (Ref. 6).

Comment

Five years after the first recommendation concerning closure of the HLW tanks, the SRS CAB is still faced with the issue of tank closure. The HLW tank closure is one of the issues many SRS CAB members believe is important at SRS. The EIS is over two years behind schedule with a final Record of Decision (ROD) yet to be determined. The SRS CAB believes it is time to move forward with the HLW Tank closure process without delay.

Recommendation

The SRS CAB recommends that DOE:

1. Complete the EIS by the end of May 2001.
2. Provide a schedule to expedite the HLW Tank closure activities.

References

1. Comments on the November 2000 Savannah River Site High-Level Waste Tank Closure Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Letter from Waters to Grainger, February 8, 2001.
2. Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation No. 15 (adopted January 23, 1996), "High Level Waste Tank Farm Closure".
3. Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation No. 43 (adopted July 22, 1997), "High Level Waste 1F and 1H Evaporators".
4. Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation No. 78 (adopted January 26, 1999), "High Level Waste Tank Closure Environmental Impact Statement".
5. Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation No. 88 (adopted May 25, 1999), "HLW Tank Closure EIS—Motion 2".
6. Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation No. 105 (adopted November 16, 1999), "Tank 19 Closure".

Agency Responses

[Department of Energy-SR](#)