



Recommendation No. 23

September 24, 1996

SRS Ten Year Plan

The recently-developed Environmental Management Ten Year Plan represents a significant departure from traditional Department of Energy planning strategies. The Plan provides a comprehensive framework for activities across the DOE complex and is a guide for site-specific budgets and priorities. The SRS Citizens Advisory Board welcomes the opportunity to participate in the planning process which will have a significant impact on the future of the Savannah River Site. After a broad overview of the Plan, the Board recommends the following:

1. Adequate funding must be provided early in the decade to permit reductions of mortgage and support costs. These reductions are essential to make resources available for continuing risk and cost reductions in later years. Initial savings resulting from productivity improvement initiatives should be reinvested in risk and mortgage reduction activities at the sites where the economies were achieved to stimulate further cost effectiveness efforts.
2. The Board endorses equitable inter-site cooperation and system consolidation as a means of reducing costs and accelerating risk reduction. However, the Department of Energy must recognize that local issues may tend to create resistance to such efforts. The Department needs to be sensitive to these issues and should commit resources to working with stakeholders in order to resolve issues to the general satisfaction of affected communities.
3. The Department of Energy should recognize that the Environmental Management Ten Year Plan will likely impact materials disposition activities under DOE-Material Disposition. Cooperation between the two programs is essential to the success of both activities.
4. The Plan should call for aggressive treatment of high-activity TRU waste. The SRS Citizens Advisory Board (see CAB Recommendations Number 4 and 11) and two independent scientific peer reviews have called DOE's attention to this urgent problem on several occasions. The Board continues to be concerned about the lack of a timely resolution of this issue.
5. The Board is concerned that a decision to shut down the separations canyons may be made before a proven dry storage capability for aluminum-clad spent reactor fuel is developed. Chemical processing should remain a viable alternative until better stabilization technology is available and has been demonstrated through independent scientific peer review to be superior. The chemical processing alternative should be incorporated as an option in the Ten Year Plan.
6. It must be recognized that the number of Defense Waste Processing canisters filled is not the only measure of program effectiveness. Canister loading should be optimized to the design basis to improve facility efficiency and to best accelerate completion of the high level waste mission.
7. One issue that concerns SRS stakeholders is that various wastes are coming to SRS for temporary, interim and long-term storage with no provisions for final disposal. The Board encourages DOE to pursue permanent storage with equal vigor.

8. The realities of the budgetary process over a ten-year period are that funding may not come as planned or desired. Budget uncertainties mandate prioritizing the Ten-Year Plan components to provide a clear understanding of which items will be dropped or delayed upon funding shortfalls. Prioritization will alleviate stakeholder fears.

Agency Responses

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