



### Recommendation No. 92

July 27, 1999

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## Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Report

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### **Background**

The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board (SRS CAB) has, since its inception, repeatedly endorsed two concepts relative to the safe disposition of nuclear materials that are a legacy of the cold war as well as the Atoms for Peace program. The first is that it is entirely appropriate to use the facilities of the site whenever they provide the best means for preparing the materials for safe, permanent disposition. The second has been that the plans and decisions must clearly point toward the ultimate removal of stabilized materials to the nation's repository.

The CAB's attention has been focused on the spent nuclear fuel currently stored at SRS or scheduled to be received there in the future. A number of past recommendations have expressed the Board's concern over DOE subordination of conventional chemical processing as a treatment option in favor of less proven technologies. The CAB's Recommendation 74 in January 1999, while acknowledging the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) preferred treatment option of a melt and dilute process, urged that DOE maintain the option of processing the fuels in the canyons as long as there were any uncertainties surrounding the yet-to-be proven melt and dilute technology.

### **The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) Report**

Members of the CAB have reviewed the report of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board on the SNF treatment options that was forwarded to Mr. Owendoff in June and have received an overview by a DNFSB representative. We found the report to be the clearest, most articulate presentation of the option selection issues that we have been shown. The CAB has noted that the primary conclusion of the report: that the use of the canyons to stabilize SNF should be maximized until the development and design of the alternative treatment technology has been completed.

### **CAB Comment and Request**

- We reiterate the portion of our Recommendation 74 that addressed canyon usage:  
  
"We note that as long as the canyons continue to operate for the at-risk SNF, as well as other current or not yet defined missions, they can be reexamined as a viable treatment option. No canyon shutdown decision should be made before the cost, time and technical uncertainties of the melt and dilute option have been resolved."
- We endorse the DNFSB conclusion regarding the interim maximization of canyon usage for SNF stabilization.
- We request that the planned written reply by DOE to the DNFSB be copied to the SRS CAB.
- We request that there be a public August presentation by DOE to the CAB Nuclear Materials Management Subcommittee and interested stakeholders that addresses the DNFSB cited uncertainties on the melt and dilute option. This presentation may also be desired for the September 28 full CAB meeting

We believe that the CAB will have additional recommendations on this most important question immediately after the September full CAB meeting. We wish to provide this input prior to the anticipated Record of Decision on the SRS SNF EIS in this same time frame.

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### **Agency Responses**

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