



Department of Energy
Savannah River Operations Office
P.O. Box A
Aiken, South Carolina 29802

FEB 12 2020

Mr. Gil Allensworth, Chairperson
Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board
P.O. Box A
Aiken, South Carolina 29802

Dear Mr. Allensworth:

SUBJECT: Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Recommendation #365, Plutonium Processing
(Your letter dated, 09/25/2019)

Thank you for your recommendation regarding plutonium processing.

CAB Recommendation:

Recommends Department of Energy (DOE) take the steps necessary to accelerate the dispositioning of the six metric tons of surplus plutonium and to complete the dispositioning process no later than FY2036.

The DOE – Savannah River Operations Office (SR) does not accept your recommendation and provides the following explanation:

The disposition of surplus plutonium within the K-Area Complex is an integrated effort between DOE-Environmental Management (EM) and the National Nuclear Security Administration. Accelerating disposition of this material is already a high priority for the Department and every effort for acceleration is being considered. However, due to the space constraints of K-Area and the material characteristics of the EM surplus plutonium, disposition cannot occur by FY2036.

In addition, clarification must be made regarding the risk of plutonium stated in the background section of your recommendation. The surplus plutonium at Savannah River Site is stored in a safe manner compliant with DOE Standard, DOE-STD-3013 “Stabilization, Packaging and Storage of Plutonium Bearing-Materials”. This Standard requires multiple layers of confinement. The 3013 container includes the can containing the material stored inside a welded container and this welded container is then stored in an additional welded container. The 3013 is then stored in a “9975”, a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Type B container. The NRC standard requires the 3013 to be inside a primary confinement vessel then stored inside a secondary confinement vessel.

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This is then stored within a drum similar to a 55-gallon drum. This container system (9975 with a 3013 inside it) has been proven to meet the 10 CFR 71 transportation requirements for nuclear material.

Furthermore, the Department has a program to evaluate the storage of the plutonium to ensure the safety of the material and destructive examinations are performed on an annual basis. For these reasons, this material is not posing any additional risk to the communities surrounding the SRS.

The Department values the CAB's position on the SRS programs and, when possible, factors those opinions into Departmental decisions.

If you have any questions, please contact me or contact Maxcine Maxted, of my staff, at (803) 208-0506.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Budney
Savannah River Site Manager

NMPD-20-0009

cc:

David Borak, (EM-4.32)
Amy Boyette, DDFO
Michael Mikolanis, DDFO
Rick Toomey, SCDHEC
Trey Glen, EPA
Mark Williams, GADNR