



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

AUG 15 2000

Ms. Karen Patterson, Chair
SRS Citizens Advisory Board
1103 Conger Drive
Aiken, SC 29803

Dear Ms. Patterson:

SUBJECT: Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Recommendation No. 126, Path Forward for Consolidated Incineration Facility (CIF)

Thank you for submitting the subject recommendation regarding the path forward for the CIF. The U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) has determined that suspending operations at CIF is the correct decision to make at this time. This decision is based on several considerations; notably the current cost effectiveness of treatment at CIF, Site Treatment Plan (STP) commitments, and the need to fund higher priority programs, such as the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 94-1, within available budgets.

Please allow me to briefly review these considerations.

- My staff, as well as independent reviews, has concluded that treatment at CIF is currently not cost effective due to lack of waste feed material and operational restrictions that require high dilution ratios of the PUREX waste stream. This has resulted in unit treatment costs higher than anticipated for mixed low level waste. During this suspension period the Savannah River Site, in concert with DOE's Incineration Alternatives Team, will explore PUREX alternative treatment technologies and optimization strategies while pursuing commercial treatment options for the non-PUREX waste streams with the goal of lowering treatment costs.
- STP commitments will continue to be met. Based on operational history, CIF can suspend operations and restart in FY 2006 while meeting the STP commitment to treat 50% of backlogged PUREX by FY 2009. If CIF restart is chosen as a result of this analysis, it is our intention that CIF would operate in an optimized mode such that treatment of 100% of the remaining backlogged PUREX would occur by FY 2009. This strategy also fits well with the treatment of future PUREX waste and potential Benzene waste from salt processing projected to be available in the FY 2010 time frame. It is our belief that the non-PUREX STP commitment can be satisfied through the Broad Spectrum contract and other commercial options.

Ms. Karen Patterson

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I regret that this decision was not discussed with the CAB in a timely manner and I will work to ensure that this does not occur in the future. My staff looks forward to working closely with the DOE Incinerator Alternatives Team and the newly formed CAB focus group so that your input can be considered in PUREX treatment alternatives. If you have any questions please call me or Ray Hannah at (803) 208-1541.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Rudy', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Greg Rudy
Manager

PD:GRH:ceh

PB-00-0060