



2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201-1708

COMMISSIONER:
Douglas E. Bryant

January 3, 2001

BOARD:
Bradford W. Wyche
Chairman

William M. Hull, Jr., MD
Vice Chairman

Mark B. Kent
Secretary

Howard L. Brilliant, MD
Brian K. Smith

Louisiana W. Wright

Larry R. Chewning, Jr., DMD

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

SUBJECT: South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control responses to
the Citizens Advisory Board Recommendations 133 and 134.

Dear Ms. Patterson:

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has received the Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) recommendations 133 and 134. Recommendation 133 pertains to the Draft Permit modification to the SRS 1995 Hazardous and Mixed Waste Permit to suspend operations of the Consolidation Incineration Facility (CIF) and Recommendation 134 pertains to the modification of the South Carolina Water Classifications and Standards to lower the minimum hardness value from, 50 mg/l to 25 mg/l.

Enclosed please find DHEC's responses to the subject recommendations. We appreciate the Boards input and wish to encourage continued active participation in the challenging issues we face in the regulation and cleanup at the Savannah River Site. If you need further assistance, please contact Keith Collinsworth of my staff at (803) 898-3973.

Sincerely,

R. Lewis Shaw, P.E.
Deputy Commissioner
Environmental Quality Control

cc: Richard D Green, EPA Region IV
Thomas Heenan, DOE-SRS
Dawn Haygood, DOE-SRS
Keith Collinsworth, EQC Administration
Myra Reece, EQC Lower Savannah
Charles Gorman, BLWM

DHEC RESPONSES TO THE SRS CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD (CAB)

SRS CAB Recommendation 133

The SRS Citizens Advisory Board recommends that:

1. The SCDHEC CIF permit modification recognize the need for adequate time for the full development, implementation and operation of an alternative treatment technology before CIF closes.
2. The SCDHEC provide the SRS CAB with the assessment of the likelihood of extending the closure period and if so, the maximum allowable time the closure period could be extended.

DHEC Response

DHEC has made commensurate schedule adjustments by allowing the CIF to enter a state of suspension and giving SRS until April 1, 2002 to make a decision on its future, rather than requiring it to close within the 180-day timeframe specified in the South Carolina Hazardous Waste Regulations (SCHWMR). The SCHWMR allow for a reasonable schedule extension with good cause in accordance with R.61-79.264.112(d)(2)(i). DHEC believes that it is inappropriate at this time to further extend the date by which SRS must begin closure. However, prior to the April 1, 2002 deadline, if there is sufficient justification, SRS can submit a permit modification request for an extension. Included as part of the justification should be a description of the progress made in finding a viable alternative. If a permit modification request is submitted with appropriate justification, DHEC will consider the proposed schedule alterations with respect to the SCHWMR and other relevant information.

SRS CAB Recommendation 134

The SRS CAB recommends that the Water Classifications and Standards Regulation 61-68 remain the same for the hardness value until an environmental gain can be demonstrated to justify the economic expense.

DHEC RESPONSE

Section 303(c)(2)(B) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) requires that States must review and revise their water quality standards to include EPA's most recently developed water quality criteria. During the previous triennial review, which began in 1996 and was completed in 1998, DHEC was unaware of the lowering of the hardness value in the 1992 National Toxics Rule (NTR) until the final stages of the triennial process. By the time the issue was brought to DHEC's attention, the triennial process was too far along to include a "new" issue and still meet the required deadline. Understanding South Carolina's process and not wanting to interfere with the completion of the ongoing revisions, the EPA allowed the DHEC to wait until this triennial

review to include the change of the default hardness value. The EPA numeric criteria for hardness-dependent metals have substantial data and information regarding the increasing toxicity associated with lower hardness values. Since South Carolina waters naturally range in hardness values from the single digits to the teens, it is clear that the 25 mg/l value is actually closer to the ambient hardness than the 50 mg/l value. It would be inappropriate to retain the 50 mg/l value when all of the Department's ambient hardness data clearly show a lower value to be more representative of stream conditions.

DHEC must review and revise its water quality standards so that they reflect EPA's most recently published criteria. EPA's water quality criteria for hardness-dependent metals requires that the State use hardness values down to 25 mg/l. These criteria that EPA has developed do not contain requirements for cost-benefit analysis for those water quality standards that are necessary to protect the existing and classified uses of the waters of the State.