



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

MAR 16 2001

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

Dear Ms. Patterson:

Thank you for your January 24, 2001, letter, regarding Recommendation 136. I am specifically responding to items one and two regarding the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations and the Headquarters Study Team. Items three and four will be addressed by the Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS).

Your first recommendation asks that DOE not expand the Blue Ribbon Panel evaluations to different waste streams at the SRS. In their final report (available on line at <http://www.hr.doe.gov/seab>), the Blue Ribbon Panel recommended that DOE pursue further evaluation of technologies they believed to be "most promising" in the near term. They did not recommend any single technology. Consequently, the Office of Environmental Management (EM) Transuranic and Mixed Waste Focus Area is developing a research and development plan to describe what would be required before implementation of those "most promising" technologies could occur. Part of the plan, which my office will support, will be an assessment of the demand for those technologies across the Complex. Such an assessment is essential to ensuring we are spending our limited research and development money wisely. If the research and development effort ultimately identifies viable alternatives to incineration that could be broadly applied, site-specific circumstances would continue to be an important consideration in any deployment decision.

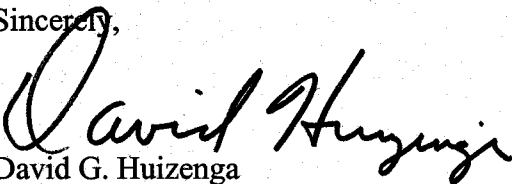
The Citizens Advisory Board also recommended the DOE-Headquarters Study Team consider operational improvements to existing DOE incinerators when it evaluates commercial treatment methods. The DOE Headquarters Study Team is charged with assessing the demand for incineration within the DOE Complex versus the availability of treatment by the commercial sector, including incineration. In October of last year the Team, led by Ms. Helen Belencan of my staff, recommended to the Assistant Secretary for EM that the decision to close the incinerator at Oak Ridge be deferred until March 2002, allowing time to assess the progress of the commercial sector and to re-assess the need for treatment. The Assistant Secretary accepted the recommendation. Ms. Belencan will be updating the analysis throughout this summer and fall, at which time any information on operational improvements at our DOE incinerators will be considered.



Please forward any additional information you may have on potential improvements for the consolidated incineration facility to her. Ms. Belen can will remain available as a resource to your Citizens Advisory Board and the Consolidated Incineration Facility Focus Group.

Thank you for your continuing involvement in the many on going activities at the SRS. Should you have any questions, please call Ms. Martha Crosland Director, Intergovernmental and Public Accountability at (202) 586-5944, or me at (202) 586-5151. If you have further questions or concerns, regarding other aspects of the EM Program, please visit our Home Page at www.em.doe.gov.

Sincerely,



David G. Huizenga
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Integration and Disposition
Office of Environmental Management

cc:

Greg Rudy, DOE-SR
Tom Heenan, DOE-SR
Barry Smith, EM-42
Martha Crosland, EM-11