



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

JUN 12 2003

Mr. Wade Waters, Chair  
Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board  
308 Pinewood Drive  
Pooler, GA 31411

Dear Mr. Waters:

**SUBJECT: Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Recommendation Number 162 – High Level Waste (HLW) Accelerated Sludge Removal (Your letter dated 5/21/03)**

Thank you for your recommendation regarding the Savannah River Site (SRS) Accelerated Sludge Removal Program. The following is my response to the two elements of your recommendation.

- 1. SRS accelerate the implementation of the Waste on Wheels (WOW) process and report on the progress of the acceleration to lower the costs and risks as soon as the information becomes available from the successful HLW Tank clean out using the WOW process.**

The Department of Energy (DOE) continues to focus on accelerated cleanup. Accelerated waste removal from HLW tanks is key to our commitment to reduce the cost of cleanup, shorten the cleanup schedule and eliminate health, safety and environmental risks. The Waste on Wheels (WOW) concept was developed to help achieve this commitment. WOW is in the early project development stage but is moving rapidly toward final design and execution. In fact, submersible pump procurement and some construction activities are already in progress. Our current target is to prepare Tank 5 for bulk sludge removal by end of 2005. This is a significant acceleration compared to the scheduled 2007 date in the latest revision to the HLW System Plan, and we are continually working to even further advance our current target date.

We will continue to update you on the progress of the project and will provide information to you regarding cost savings and risk reduction as soon as that information is available following waste removal from tank 5 utilizing the WOW process.

- 2. SRS characterize the annulus waste and evaluate the need for annulus cleaning in HLW Tank 5. SRS provide a schedule for development of a plan to demonstrate the WOW process for annulus cleaning on Tank 5 or another HLW tank requiring annulus cleaning and present the plan to the Waste Management Committee before November 19, 2003.**

Based on process knowledge and leak history, DOE anticipates that 9 tanks may need annulus cleaning. Given our knowledge of Tank 5 and assuming that current regulatory requirements must be met, we do not anticipate that Tank 5 will need annulus cleaning. We intend to evaluate,

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verify and document the decision for annulus cleaning of Tank 5 prior to completing waste removal from the tank.

The WOW concept includes the design of equipment to facilitate the removal of waste from the annuli of tanks should annulus cleaning be needed in order to meet tank closure performance objectives. Following completion and validation of an accelerated cleanup baseline, the DOE will be in a position to determine when the first annulus cleaning may be required. We will provide a schedule for development of a plan to demonstrate the WOW process for annulus cleaning following validation of the cleanup baseline and will present that plan to the Waste Management Committee before November 19, 2003.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Tony Polk at (803) 208-7560.

Sincerely,

  
Jeffrey M. Allison  
Manager

OB-03-025