



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

OCT 24 2003

Mr. Wade Waters, Chair
Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board
308 Pinewood Drive
Pooler, GA 31322

Dear Mr. Waters:

SUBJECT: Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Recommendation Number 171 – National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementation (Your letter, 09/29/03)

Thank you for your Recommendation concerning implementation of the NEPA process for consolidation of Environmental Management (EM) owned plutonium and a disposition path for these materials. Since the Department of Energy's (DOE) cancellation of the plutonium immobilization program in 2002, my staff has been working with the Assistant Secretary for EM and the National Nuclear Security Administration to define both a NEPA strategy and a path to disposition materials originally intended for immobilization.

In the Recommendation, your comment on the Storage and Disposition (S&D) of Weapons-Usable Fissile Materials Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) (S&D PEIS, DOE/EIS-0229) was referenced as the NEPA analysis for plutonium consolidation and that this appears to conflict with the stated need in the Savannah River Site (SRS) Performance Management Plan for a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to select the preferred approach for plutonium without a clear disposition path. The reference to the S&D PEIS is in regard to consolidated storage of plutonium at the SRS. The SRS Performance Management Plan refers to a need for a supplemental EIS to evaluate alternatives for the disposition of plutonium materials that, following cancellation of the immobilization program, do not have a clear disposition path. Consolidated storage of plutonium, and plutonium disposition, are different activities.

My responses to your specific recommendations are as follows.

1. Prepare a supplemental EIS on the consolidation of EM owned plutonium at SRS.

The S&D PEIS evaluated plutonium storage alternatives, including a Consolidated Storage alternative under which the DOE assessed the impacts of storage of up to 50 metric tons of surplus, weapons usable plutonium at the SRS. DOE referred to the S&D PEIS and the consolidated storage alternative in a Supplement Analysis and Amended Record of Decision prepared in 2002 for consolidation of the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site and surplus plutonium at SRS. As you know, Governor Hodges challenged this NEPA review, and both the Federal District Court and the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit concluded that DOE's decision was backed by proper NEPA analysis. Based on these facts, a Supplemental

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EIS is not necessary to properly support a decision to complete consolidation of plutonium at SRS. My staff has recommended to EM that, if DOE decides to consolidate plutonium at SRS, an Amended Record of Decision be prepared to disclose that decision.

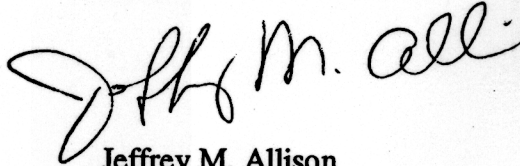
2. Prepare a supplemental EIS to select the preferred approach for plutonium without a clear disposition path, such as non-MOXable plutonium.

Over the past year, my staff has been working on a disposition strategy for non-MOXable plutonium. No decision on a disposition strategy has been made at this time. When a disposition strategy is proposed, DOE will perform the appropriate NEPA review.

My staff will keep you informed on the progress of the consolidation and disposition strategy, and the NEPA review.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or Andrew Grainger of my staff at (803) 952-8001.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff M. Allison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeff" and last name "Allison" clearly distinguishable.

Jeffrey M. Allison
Manager

ED-04-002

cc: D. Haygood, WSRC (CAB Files)