



Department of Energy
Savannah River Operations Office
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Aiken, South Carolina 29802
AUG 24 2004

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MAIL CONTROL

Ms. Jean Sulc, Chair
Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board
24 Harbor River Circle
St. Helena Island, South Carolina 29920

Dear Ms. Sulc:

SUBJECT: Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Recommendation Number 195 – Receipt of Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) at Savannah River Site (SRS) (Your letter, 7/28/04)

Thank you for your Recommendation concerning receipt of SNF at SRS.

My response to your specific recommendations is as follows.

1. The Department of Energy Headquarters (DOE-HQ) continue to investigate and implement a SNF disposition strategy that will accelerate the SNF program at SRS.

DOE is continuing its planning efforts to accelerate closure of all Environmental Management activities at SRS by 2025. The Draft 2004 Environmental Management Program Performance Management Plan (PMP) calls for the de-inventory of L-basin and shipment of all SNF to the federal repository to be completed by 2020.

2. DOE Savannah River Operations Office (SR) provide an update on the SNF program uncertainties on or before January 15, 2005.

SR will provide an update to the CAB by January 15, 2005.

3. DOE-HQ identify SNF that can not be directly disposed into the Federal Repository prior to its shipment to SRS, and establish and document an alternative disposition prior to accepting it for shipment to SRS.

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), working in conjunction with the Department of State, is in the process of identifying materials that, for national security reasons, would be beneficial to store in the United States. Currently, there is no plan to store materials at SR that do not have a disposition path. Should there be a national security requirement to accept other types of nuclear materials, coordination with the state and federal agencies would occur in advance.

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4. DOE-HQ present the direct disposal form of spent fuel to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) immediately and obtain a binding determination that it can actually be disposed in the Federal Repository.

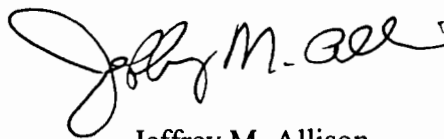
In 1997, SR entered into an interagency agreement with NRC to review and comment on our development of the direct co-disposal and melt and dilute technologies. In their formal response in June 1998, the NRC stated that their staff "believes that both the direct co-disposal and melt-dilute options would be acceptable concepts for disposal of aluminum based research reactor SNF in the repository." SR, as well as the National Spent Nuclear Fuel Program, which is located in Idaho, will continue to address any comments and suggestions provided by the NRC. A binding agreement at this point in time is premature. The issuance of a repository license is the only binding agreement which will allow SNF and high level waste to be accepted in the repository.

5. DOE-HQ keep H-Canyon operable until there is certainty that spent fuel, which could be processed there, can be disposed in the federal repository.

The Draft 2004 PMP maintains the operability of H-Canyon through 2011 until the treatment and storage facility for spent nuclear fuel and plutonium disposition process becomes operational, which is scheduled for 2010. DOE expects to approve the PMP during the fall of 2004.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Randall Ponik at (803) 208-3973.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey M. Allison
Manager

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