



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

FEB 22 2006

Ms. Karen Patterson, Chair  
Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board  
1103 Conger Drive  
Aiken, South Carolina 29803

Dear Ms. Patterson:

SUBJECT: Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Recommendation 226 –  
Proposed National Policy on Buried Alpha Waste (Letter, Sulc to Allison, 1/27/06)

Thank you for your recommendation regarding a proposed national policy on buried alpha waste. As stated in the referenced letter, no formal written Department of Energy (DOE) policy exists on how to manage buried alpha waste. However, DOE is managing buried alpha waste and environmental media, consistent with the approach outlined in the December 22, 2005, letter from Mr. James Rispoli, DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management (enclosed).

I agree with your assessment that the existing approach does not need to be changed. In this approach, site-specific strategies for alpha waste disposition are developed with the regulators and with input from stakeholders. These strategies consider factors such as the manner of burial, quantities buried, current and future risks, land-use plans for the facility and nearby area, availability of cost-effective technologies, and local concerns.

For example, DOE has safely and cost-effectively dispositioned alpha waste by burial in the Old Radioactive Waste Burial Ground (ORWBG), consistent with the July 2001 recommendation from the CAB ORWBG Focus Group. Additionally, a robust geosynthetic cover is being placed over the ORWBG in accordance with a Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act Record of Decision.

In the event that a new national strategy for alpha waste is to be developed, DOE will ensure the involvement of local stakeholders and regulators in the decision-making process to support discussion of a total systems approach that would consider risks, costs, and safety concerns.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Mr. Wade Whitaker at (803) 952-7760.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Allison  
Manager

SGP-06-007

Enclosure:  
Rispoli Letter, 12/22/05

cc w/encl:  
Robert King, SCDHEC  
James Palmer, EPA-4