



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

**MAR 10 2006**

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

Dear Ms. Patterson:

SUBJECT: Response to Recommendation 227, Salt Waste Processing Facility (SWPF) Seismic Qualifications Decision (Letter, Sulc to Allison, 1/27/06)

Thank you for the subject recommendation. My responses to the six parts of the recommendation are as follows.

1. **Department of Energy Savannah River Operations Office (DOE-SR) resolve any open issues with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) related to the deliquification, dissolution, and adjustment process by March 1, 2006, in order to start the process in order to meet the current schedule.**

DOE is working with the State of South Carolina, including SCDHEC and the South Carolina Governor's Nuclear Advisory Council (GNAC), to develop a modified approach to implementing our interim processing strategy. Significant progress is being made and DOE will continue to provide updates to the Waste Management Committee (WMC) on the status of these on-going activities.

2. **By March 28, 2006, DOE-SR review with the Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) the methodology used in reaching the SWPF confinement decision and explain how or if the methodology would be changed for future decisions on confinement/containment design.**

On January 31, 2006, DOE provided the WMC an extensive presentation on how DOE made the decisions associated with the SWPF design. Detailed written responses to the 58 questions submitted through the WMC to DOE were provided to the WMC on March 7, 2006.

Future decisions on critical issues such as the SWPF will be communicated fully with the SRS CAB as they are being considered, consistent with the lessons learned discussed at the January 31, 2006, WMC meeting.

3. **DOE-SR manage the SWPF re-design process in order to shorten the schedule as much as possible, including the use of incentives and other tools to reduce the barriers to a speedy, safe and effective design of SWPF. Provide quarterly updates to the SRS CAB on how the process is being accelerated.**

DOE plans to utilize appropriate contract mechanisms, to ensure that the SWPF design and construction activities are accelerated to the extent practical. DOE also has in place a dedicated project team to provide day-to-day oversight of the contractor's activities in order to ensure the

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SWPF project is being executed in a safe, cost-effective, and timely manner. DOE will update the WMC on a quarterly basis as to the progress on SWPF.

4. **DOE-SR demonstrate to the SRS CAB and SCDHEC that a detailed budget has been developed, and funding is available or will be requested and prioritized, to complete the re-design and construction of SWPF with the minimum of startup delays with a target of the original 2009 startup date.**

DOE has updated the Congressional project data sheet for the SWPF to identify the additional funding required to support the enhanced design effort and revised construction schedule. Funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 is adequate to support the design activities. Adequate funding for the SWPF in FY 2007 was requested in the President's budget but is subject to Congressional approval. DOE plans to request appropriate funding each year to support the schedule. DOE will be prepared to brief the SRS CAB or WMC on the budget status for the SWPF project at appropriate meetings during each budget cycle.

5. **DOE-SR specify dates for a series of meetings within FY 2006 for SWPF working meetings (similar to the December 13, 2005, WMC meeting between the SCDHEC, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB), DOE, SRS Subcontractors, SRS CAB, and the public).**

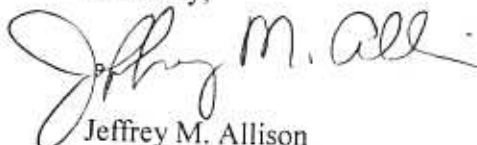
DOE has worked with the WMC to develop a schedule of meetings throughout 2006 that includes discussions on the SWPF, the Salt Program, and other waste disposition activities. DOE is supportive of special meetings as necessary to review the progress on the SWPF and to provide updates at any scheduled meetings that the SRS CAB or WMC wishes. DOE will work with the WMC, SCDHEC, GNAC, and the DNFSB to ensure broad participation in meetings on these critical issues to ensure that all perspectives are presented for the SRS CAB and other members of the public.

6. **DOE-SR officially include a representative from the SRS CAB as a participant in the Salt Disposition Working Group discussions whenever DOE meets with the SCDHEC, DNFSB and other stakeholders.**

The joint working group meetings include discussions of policy, programmatic, and regulatory issues between governmental organizations. DOE will share the outcome of these discussions and the various perspectives of the participants with the SRS CAB at the meetings noted in response to part 5 above.

Again, thank you for your recommendation on this very important project. We look forward to working with the SRS CAB as the SWPF project moves from design into construction and, eventually, into operations. If you have any questions, please contact me or Mr. Bill Clark at (803) 208-0231.

Sincerely,

  
Jeffrey M. Allison  
Manager