



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

**Mr. Manuel Bettencourt, Chair**  
**Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board**

**Dear Mr. Bettencourt:**

**SUBJECT: Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Recommendation Number 272 – Increase the Number of Savannah River Site (SRS) Public Tours (Your letter, 06/03/10)**

The Department of Energy (DOE) is extremely pleased to be able to offer public tours once again, and that the program has been successful. DOE is committed to this initiative and continuously evaluating its effectiveness in consideration of the current security threat level of our Nation, available funding, resources, and public interest.

In 2009, 188 tours of the SRS were conducted, which included 14 public tours and 174 mission-related tours, reaching 3,100 visitors. SRS mission-related tours include Members of Congress, Congressional staff, State and local elected officials, community and business leaders, activists, employees from other DOE Sites, DOE-Headquarters officials, members of the SRS Citizens Advisory Board, corporate executives from the various parent companies at SRS, and project pre-proposal teams. In 2010, we were pleased to be able to increase the number of public tours from 14 annually to 23 annually. As you can see, the SRS tours program is active and conducts all types of tours frequently.

In consideration of your recommendation, the Department offers the following response.

1. Formulate a strategy to increase the number and scope of onsite public tours for 2010 and beyond.

Since the SRS public tours program restart in 2009, we have increased the number of public tours from 14 in 2009 to 23 in 2010.

Based on your recommendation, and the high public interest, we have developed a strategy to increase the number of SRS public tours in 2011 to 30 annually. At the end of 2011, we will evaluate the need to increase the number of tours beyond 30 annually based on its effectiveness and in consideration of the security threat level at that time of our Nation, the available funding, the resources, and the public interest.

2. Consider privatizing and other methods of conducting tours which may significantly lower the cost, while supporting a larger number of tours.

Safety, liability, and the consistency of the onsite operational knowledge are key elements for successful public tours. The current costs of the public tour program are determined by the Department to be the most cost effective. Administering the public tours "in-house" is considered reasonable costs; and in addition, meets the Site's safety requirements and reduces risks to the public and liability.

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3. Offer some tours on weekends so that interested students and the working public could have the opportunity to attend.

SRS public tours are offered to educate and inform the public about current Site operations and future missions. Historical evaluations demonstrate that conducting tours during regular business hours is the most effective in reaching the maximum targeted audience and best use of the Site resources. The majority of work shifts follow a Monday through Friday schedule. On weekends and holidays, the security force would be minimal and the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory and the Central Training Facility are closed. Weekend tours would require manpower overtime, off-hours usage of facilities, and peak transportation rentals increasing costs without increasing awareness of the Site. Therefore, we do not believe conducting weekend tours would benefit the Site or the public.

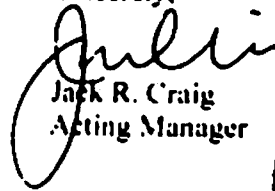
Although students under the age of 18 do not meet the Site requirement to participate in Site tours, we do have an active educational outreach program that reaches over 5,000 students annually. The Science Technology Enrichment Program (STEP) offers hands-on environmental science activities at the Forest Service area. In addition, SRS routinely visits local school classroom demonstrations and participates in career fairs. The SRS Outreach Programs is effective in reaching many students in the Central Savannah River Area.

4. Offer an alternative registration method, perhaps on a limited basis, so that those without computer skills or access could have the opportunity to participate.

In 2011, phone registration and computer based registration will be advertised and available until all 30 SRS public tour seats are reserved. After all reservations are complete, a phone number contact will continue to be offered on the website for any questions, cancellations, and last minute registration based on availability.

In summary, we appreciate and accept your recommendation. We will increase the number of SRS public tours in 2011 to 30 annually. We will continuously evaluate our ability and opportunities to increase the number of public tours in the out years in consideration of the current security threat level of our Nation, available funding, resources, and public interest.

Sincerely,

  
Jack R. Craig  
Acting Manager

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