



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

APR 02 1999

Ms. Ann Loadholt, Chair
SRS Citizens Advisory Board
P. O. Box 365
Barnwell, SC 29812

Dear Ms. Loadholt:

SUBJECT: Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Recommendation Number 82, Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (WMPEIS) Record of Decision for High Level Waste (HLW)

Thank you for submitting the subject recommendation regarding the Record of Decision for HLW. We are referring the recommendation to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) Headquarters (DOE-HQ) to be included in the WMPEIS process.

We agree that maximizing the use of HLW treatment and storage facilities across the DOE complex is very important. We also agree that it is important for DOE to open a geologic repository for the placement of vitrified HLW as soon as safely and technically feasible. DOE Savannah River Operations Office (SR) is supporting the complex to help achieve these goals.

We would like to respond to the specific items listed in Recommendation 82 as follows:

1. DOE SR technical staff are actively supporting the complex to determine the optimum integrated approach for the treatment and storage of HLW. This is an ongoing process which includes leadership by senior management to support identified cost saving approaches. It is one of the prime goals of the Environmental Management Integration Team (EMI) which is composed of managers from sites around the DOE complex and directed by Mr. Owendoff, Assistant Secretary for EM.
2. In response to CAB Recommendation Number 79, DOE SR stated its commitment to meeting Site Treatment Plan commitments and, accordingly, its expectation to produce 200 canisters of vitrified HLW in Fiscal Year (FY) 2000. With respect to the CAB's recommendation to increase funding, DOE SR noted such funding increase would reduce the risk related to assuring continuous feed to DWPF over the longer-term, but finding these funds within the overall DOE budget would be difficult. As stated in response to Recommendation Number 79, DOE SR will inform DOE-HQ of the CAB's recommendation to increase funding to DOE SR for this purpose.

Ms. Ann Loadholt

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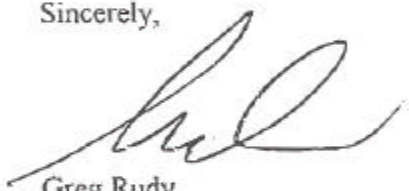
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3. Through the EMI process mentioned in item one above, a formal and detailed technical and cost evaluation is done for potential integration actions. The results provide an indication of benefits and cost savings for each proposed action across the complex. Before a HLW project is developed, designed and built, a review is done during the conceptual design to identify options and select the option with the best benefits for the associated cost.
4. More recent DOE-HQ reviews of potential programmatic issues, new onsite storage methods, and being able to ship five years sooner than previously expected have greatly reduced the potential cost savings to DOE from shipping West Valley treated HLW to DWPF. EM is working with the repository to possibly ship vitrified HLW as early as FY 2010. DOE will be glad to brief the CAB on this topic.


DOE agrees that these topics are important and will continue to work them very closely to ensure that HLW is managed safely and cost effectively across the complex. We will continue to keep you involved and informed through briefings at your request.

If you have any questions, please call me or Howard Gnann at (803) 208-6076.

Sincerely,



Greg Rudy
Manager



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