



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

OCT 07 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 97 – The
Shipment of Pu-238 Wastes to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

Thank-you for submitting the subject recommendation on shipping the Savannah River Pu-238 wastes to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) for permanent disposal. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) appreciates the CAB's interest and shares their concern of the importance of safely disposing of this waste. With respect to specifically addressing each of your recommendations:

1. Savannah River is working closely with the DOE Carlsbad Area Office, responsible for the WIPP facility, to expedite the TRUPACT II Safety Analysis Report revisions to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that expand the capability of the TRUPACT II to transport increasing amounts of Pu-238 waste. We will provide you an update on this subject in March 2000;
2. Savannah River is working with the DOE Office of Science and Technology and with the Mixed Low Level Waste Center of Excellence to initiate a pilot demonstration project to evaluate technologies to destroy the organic component in our Pu-238 waste matrix;
3. It is our preference to solve the Pu-238 transportation issues through technology development, apart from an organic destruction method. However, we agree with the CAB that a two-track approach is prudent until we prove that we can safely transport the Pu-238 waste without organic destruction.

In March 2000, or sooner if requested, we will provide you an update as to our progress on resolving the issues associated with Pu-238 transportation. Also, per your request, we will forward a copy of your recommendation and our response to DOE Headquarters as well as to the Carlsbad Area Office, which is responsible for the WIPP facility. If you have any questions, please call me or Dale Ormond at (803) 725-8013.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Rudy", is written over the typed name.

Greg Rudy
Manager