



SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Waste Management Committee

Meeting Summary

September 25, 2000
First Baptist Church
Barnwell, SC

The Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Waste Management Committee (WMC) met on Monday, September 25 at 7 p.m., the First Baptist Church, Barnwell, SC. The purpose of the meeting was to review draft motions on Mound TRU Waste Shipments to SRS; Environmental Assessment for the Transportation of SRS Mixed Low Level (MLLW) and Certain Low-Level Waste (LLW) for Treatment and Disposal at Commercial and Government Facilities; the Request for Data/ Information on Alternative Technologies to Incineration; and to hear public comment. Attendance was as follows:

CAB Members

Wade Waters*
Lola Richardson*
Beckie Dawson*
Bill Willoughby*
Perry Holcomb*
William Lawrence*
Karen Patterson*
Murray Riley
Sallie Connah
Beaurine Wilkins
Jean Sulc

Stakeholders

Lynn Waishwell, CRESP
Rick McLeod, Tech. Advisor

Regulators

Julie Corkran, EPA
Ken Feely, EPA
John Grady, EPA
James Burckhalter, SCDHEC

DOE/Contractors

Tom Treger, DOE
Virgil Sauls, DOE
Dale Ormond, DOE
Brian Hennessey, DOE
Ray Hannah, DOE
Mike Simmons, DOE
Julie Petersen, DOE
Sonny Goldston, WSRC
Don Zecha, WSRC
Mary Flora, WSRC
Helen Villasor, WSRC

* Denotes WMC members present

Note: Georgia Leverett, a WMC member, was unable to attend.

Wade Waters, WMC Chair, welcomed those in attendance and asked for public comments. There were none.

Before asking for introductions, Mr. Waters announced that the presentation and draft motion addressing the release of scrap metal and materials would be postponed until a later date since the Department of Energy (DOE) had not received either the report expected on September 15, 2000, or the "Steel Mill Study" information. Mr. Waters said that the WMC would be notified when the information became available.

Mr. Waters announced that because of the unavailability of speakers from the High Level Waste (HLW) Program, the HLW Overview was also being postponed until the Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board's (CAB) November meeting. Mr. Waters noted that since SRS ends its

fiscal year at the end of September, HLW personnel who traditionally provide presentations to the WMC were unable to attend the meeting.

Mr. Waters then asked the attendees to introduce themselves. Julie Corkran, EPA introduced John Grady, who is on a one-year detail with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and will be rotating assignments within the various EPA organizations.

Mound TRU Waste Shipments to SRS Draft Motion

Wade Waters, Motion Manager prefaced the reading of the draft motion by stating that he wanted to share the TRU waste information that he received directly from the Mound Site with the group. Mr. Waters discussed Mound's TRU waste volumes and its characterization process. Mr. Waters also showed photographs of Mound's protective waste storage conditions and indicated that the TRU waste is stored in a climate controlled building and has never been exposed to the elements. Mr. Waters said that it is his opinion that bringing the Mound waste to SRS is the right thing to do.

In reading the draft motion background, Mr. Waters said the Mound site is located near Cincinnati, Ohio and has about 150 cubic meters of TRU waste. Mound is scheduled for closure in 2004 and DOE is currently discussing the transfer of Mound's legacy TRU waste and the potential for another 150 cubic meters of TRU waste from decontamination and decommissioning activities to SRS with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC). As part of the current proposed initiatives to transfer the Mound waste to SRS, DOE would not ship any waste from Mound until SRS ships more waste to Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

Under current transportation requirements, Mr. Waters explained that the Mound waste cannot go directly to the WIPP without some assay, sorting, segregating, and repackaging. Consolidating this activity at SRS, which has a similar TRU waste need, instead of DOE operating two separate facilities, can save considerable taxpayer money and allow Mound to close on schedule. In addition, the total volume of Mound waste is small compared to the total Pu-238 waste volume at SRS, and has only a fraction of the activity level as compared to the total TRU waste volume at SRS.

Mr. Waters said that what is important to the CAB under this plan, is that up to 600 cubic meters of PU-239 waste will leave SRS and the State of South Carolina quicker than originally scheduled and at no funding requirements from SRS.

Issues: Several CAB members expressed concerns about repackaging the waste and transportation issues. Dale Ormond, DOE TRU Waste Manager clarified some of the questions by stating that the way the waste is packaged now it cannot go directly to WIPP and Mound does not have the capability to repackage the waste. Mr. Ormond added that research and development for hydrogen getters (technology that absorbs hydrogen out of the atmosphere) is ongoing and once this technology is available it will increase the amount of waste that can be placed in the TRUPACT II transporters. In response to Perry Holcomb's concern on the equity issue of shipping the curie content volume to WIPP, Mr. Ormond said that SRS is not going to ship off as much waste as it brings in. However, Mr. Ormond explained that SRS already has an inventory of ~600,000 curies of plutonium; therefore, bringing in another thousand is less than a one percent increase of SRS's current curie inventory.

Actions: The CAB technical advisor is to make a few editorial corrections to the draft motion before it is presented to the CAB at the September 26, 2000 meeting.

Environmental Assessment for the Transportation of SRS Mixed Low Level (MLLW) and Certain Low-Level Waste (LLW) for Treatment and Disposal at Commercial and Government Facilities

William Lawrence, Motion Manager for this draft motion read the background, which states that the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the offsite transportation of low-level and mixed low-level radioactive waste has many purposes. The first is to ensure that National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements have been met. Second, it ensures that the transportation of waste to DOE and commercial facilities has been properly analyzed in order to protect human health and the environment. Third, it supports the Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (WMPEIS), Record of Decision (ROD), which allows mixed waste disposal at offsite locations. Fourth, the EA provides a worst case scenario for offsite waste shipments.

Mr. Lawrence said that what is important to the CAB is that the EA concludes that latent cancer fatalities are less than one, fatalities are less than one due to traffic accidents, and there are no disproportionate environmental justice impacts and no adverse environmental impacts.

Mr. Lawrence noted the public comment period was extended to the end of September so the CAB would have an opportunity to provide its input through this recommendation. For example, with this EA in place, SRS would have the ability to ship its difficult LLW offsite.

Issues: Perry Holcomb expressed his opinion that shipping Iodine-129, which is highly mobile, is a concern that should not be taken lightly. Mr. Ormond said all materials are packaged to meet the Department of Transportation (DOT) models, which includes packaging that minimizes the release of material in the event of an accident. In response to a concern about carriers, Don Zecha confirmed that carriers are not selected at random and that the states control the carriers. In the event of an accident, Mr. Zecha said the local government authority controls the accident site; DOE does not have control of the cleanup.

Actions: The CAB Technical Advisor is to make editorial corrections to the draft motion before it is presented to the CAB at its September 27, 2000 meeting. As a result of interest expressed by the CAB, a request was made to provide a comprehensive briefing to the CAB by state government Emergency Responders at a future CAB meeting.

Request for Data/Information on Alternative Technologies to Incineration

Perry Holcomb, Motion Manager began the draft motion review by stating that DOE-HQ is committed to identifying both regulatory and technological alternatives to incineration. As part of an agreement between DOE-HQ and a citizen's group (*Keep Yellowstone Nuclear Free*), DOE-HQ established a Blue-Ribbon panel of independent scientific experts to explore technological alternatives to incineration. Mr. Holcomb said that several investigations into treatment options of mixed low-level waste (MLLW) including a report by Dr. Carl Cooley, which has specific conclusions that incineration technology is safe and effective. Mr. Holcomb said the CAB agrees with the Cooley report and has consistently supported getting on with waste disposal using existing technologies.

Mr. Holcomb noted that the CAB agrees with the internal investigation that incineration is safe and effective for treating MLLW and does not see the need in duplicating the work of this internal report, as the request for information seems to do. Mr. Holcomb said that the CAB is also aware that DOE-HQ is conducting another complex wide study dealing with the same issues. Therefore, the Blue Ribbon Panel is the third study group conducting investigations into alternative technologies to incineration. This duplication of effort gives the impression that DOE has not coordinated its efforts and demonstrates a considerable waste of both time and resources.

In summarizing the draft motion, Mr. Holcomb said:

- The Blue Ribbon Panel should use Carl Cooley's report in its recommendation to DOE-HQ;

- DOE-HQ revise the mission of the Blue Ribbon panel from exploring technological alternatives to incineration to identifying the best available technology for treatment of transuranic, mixed transuranic, low-level waste, mixed low-level waste or other incinerable waste;
- DOE-SR follow the same objective of identifying the best available technology for treatment of PUREX waste in its investigation. Alternative treatment technologies should only be investigated if they can meet all regulatory requirements, and are environmentally cleaner and less expensive to operate than incineration; and
- DOE-HQ justify the duplication of time and resources by funding three separate studies of alternative technologies for incineration.

Issues: None.

Actions: The CAB Technical Advisor is to make minor editorial corrections to the draft motion before it is presented to the CAB at its September 27, 2000 meeting.

Public Comment

Mr. Waters asked if there was any other public comment. With there being none, Mr. Waters adjourned the meeting.

Meeting handouts may be obtained by calling 1-800-249-8155.