



Environmental Bulletin

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from the Savannah River Site

FONSI signed for offsite transportation EA

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on February 15, 2001, for the environmental assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-1308) prepared for the proposed offsite transportation of certain low-level radioactive waste (LLW) and mixed (i.e., hazardous and radioactive) low-level radioactive waste (MLLW) from the Savannah River Site (SRS). The EA evaluated the potential for significant impacts associated with the proposed shipment of five LLW or MLLW forms to offsite facilities for treatment and/or final disposal.

The Department of Energy (DOE) needed a viable near-term treatment and disposal option for these five SRS waste forms. DOE needed to take action in a cost-effective and timely manner because onsite treatment and disposal capabilities for these waste forms does not exist at this time and/or it would be more beneficial to DOE to dispose of the waste at another location. In addition, the estimated volume of these wastes would likely exceed regulatory limits for post-generation storage. This situation would not be consistent with the agreements between DOE and South Carolina concerning MLLW management under the *SRS Site Treatment Plan* that was developed pursuant to the Federal Facili-

ty Compliance Act of 1992. Violating these agreements could result in fines and penalties for DOE and suspension of the site's Resource Conservation & Recovery Act Permit.

The proposed action in the EA entailed only the transportation, by rail or truck, of certain SRS LLW and MLLW forms to offsite commercial and Government facilities. Neither the SRS activities that would generate these waste forms nor the treatment and disposal operations at these offsite facilities were included in the scope of the EA. DOE, after a review of the EA, has determined that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and, as a result of this determination, the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required. Therefore, DOE has issued the FONSI.

For copies of the EA and FONSI, contact Andrew R. Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer, U. S. Department of Energy, Savannah River Operations Office, Building 742-A, Room 185, Aiken, SC 29808; nepa@srs.gov; telephone: 1-800-881-7292.

Modifications requested for landfill closure

The Department of Energy (DOE)-Savannah River Operations Office has requested from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) modifications to the Savannah River Site's (SRS) 2000 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Part B Permit Renewal Application, Volume XXIII, Sanitary Landfill Postclosure.

This revision (Rev. 1) is in response to a Notice of Deficiency issued by SCDHEC. The revision provides administrative clarifications on document and data references, monitoring schedules, and facility drawings and maps. More information, including the actual permit application, is available for review and copying at the US DOE Public Reading Room located in the University of South Carolina-Aiken library, or by contacting personnel listed below. The permittees compliance history during the life of the permit being modified is available from the Agency contact person.

SCDHEC
Attn: John Litton, P.E., Director
Division of Waste Management
Bureau of Land and Waste Management
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 896-4000

Jim Moore
Westinghouse Savannah River Company
Savannah River Site
Building 742-A
Aiken, SC 29808
1-800-249-8155
jim02.moore@srs.gov

MOX construction request in local libraries

Non-proprietary copies of the Construction Authorization Request for the Mixed Oxide Fabrication Facility, submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission by Duke Cogema Stone & Webster by letter dated February 28, 2001, have been mailed to the following libraries:

Aiken, SC

Aiken County Library
314 Chesterfield St, SW
Aiken, SC 29801-7171

Raleigh, NC

South Raleigh Library
1601-14 Crosslink Road
Raleigh, NC 27610

North Augusta, SC

North Augusta Branch Library (Nancy Carson Library)
135 Edgefield Road
North Augusta, SC 29841

Atlanta, GA

Kirkwood Branch Library
11 Kirkwood Road, S.E.
Atlanta, GA 30317

Columbia, SC

Richland County Public Library
1431 Assembly Street
Columbia, SC 29201-3101
Web site: <http://www/richland.lib.sc.us/>

Charlotte, NC

Main Library
310 North Tryon Street
Charlotte, NC 28202
email: infoserv@plcmc.lib.nc.us

Savannah, GA

Chatham-Effingham-Liberty Regional Library
2002 Bull Street
Savannah, GA 31401-8564
Web Address: www.co.chatham.ga.us/

Augusta, GA

East Central Georgia Regional Library
902 Greene Street
Augusta, GA 30901-2294
Web Address: ecgrl.home.duesouth.net/

DOE Savannah River Site

U.S. Department of Energy
Public Reading Room Library
471 University Parkway
Aiken, SC 29801
email: Pauline.Conner.pauli@aiken.sc.edu

Salt Processing Draft SEIS released for public review

The Salt Processing Alternatives Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) evaluates alternatives for separating the high-activity and low-activity salt waste from the liquid high-level radioactive waste now stored in underground tanks at the Savannah River Site (SRS). After separation, the high-activity fraction of the salt waste would be vitrified in the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) and stored until it could be disposed of as high-level waste in a geologic repository. The low-activity fraction would be disposed of as saltstone in vaults at SRS. High-level radioactive sludge waste continues to be successfully vitrified at DWPF, with approximately 1075 glass waste canisters produced since radioactive operations began in 1996.

An alternative to separate the high-activity and low-activity salt waste is needed to replace the In-Tank Precipitation (ITP) process that could not achieve production goals and safety requirements. This Draft SEIS analyzes the impacts of construction and operation of four alternative technologies – Small Tank Precipitation, Ion Exchange, Solvent Extraction, and Direct Disposal in Grout – and No Action alternative.

Replacement of the existing ITP process constitutes a substantial change to the operation of DWPF, as evaluated in a 1994 SEIS (DOE/EIS-0082-S) to a 1982 EIS (DOE/EIS-0082); therefore, DOE-SR has prepared this second SEIS to address the potential environmental impacts of alternatives to the ITP process. The *Savannah River Site Salt Processing Alternatives Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (DOE/EIS-0082-S2D) is available online at tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa/docs/docs.htm.

Publication of the Notice of Availability of the Draft SEIS in the *Federal Register* on March 30 began a 45-day public comment period that ends May 14, 2001. The Department will hold two public meetings to discuss the Draft Supplemental EIS and receive comments. Comments may be submitted orally or in writing to DOE at the public meetings and by voice mail, e-mail, or regular mail to: Mr. Andrew R. Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer; U.S. Department of Energy; Savannah River Operations Office, Building 742-A, Room 183; Aiken, South Carolina 29802, ATTN: Salt Processing; (800) 881-7292 (voice message and fax); or nepa@srs.gov.

DOE will consider all comments received or postmarked by the end of the comment period in the preparation of the Final Supplemental EIS. Comments received or postmarked after the close of the comment period will be considered to the extent practicable. DOE plans to publish the Final SEIS, which will identify a preferred salt processing technology, in June 2001.

SEIS public meetings

Tuesday, May 1
1 p.m. and 5 p.m.
North Augusta Community Center
101 Brookside Drive
North Augusta, SC

Thursday, May 3
1 p.m. and 5 p.m.
Holiday Inn Coliseum
630 Assembly Street
Columbia, SC

Current NEPA actions affecting SRS

• **Offsite Transportation of Certain Low-Level and Mixed Radioactive Wastes from Savannah River Site (SRS) for Treatment and Disposal at Commercial and Government Facilities (DOE/EA-1308)** The environmental assessment (EA) analyzed the potential environmental consequences associated with transporting certain low-level and mixed low-level radioactive waste to offsite commercial and Government facilities for treatment and/or final disposal. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed in February. (See article on page 1)

• **Evaluate an Alternative Approach for the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) Glass Waste Canister Storage Facility at SRS (DOE/EA-1327)** The EA will analyze potential environmental consequences associated with building and operating onsite above-ground concrete pads for casks containing DWPF canisters. The storage casks would be made using SRS's inventory of depleted uranium trioxide powder. The action would significantly reduce the onsite inventory of depleted uranium trioxide powder. The EA is on hold while the contracting strategy is being reevaluated.

• **Removal, Transportation and Storage of Strontium-90 Radioisotopic Thermoelectric Generators (RTG) (DOE/EA-1351)** This EA is being developed jointly by DOE and the U.S. Air Force. It addresses the (1) removal and transportation of 10 Strontium-90 RTGs from Burnt Mountain Seismic Array Laboratory in Alaska to a DOE site or an Air Force facility, and (2) long-term storage of the 10 identified plus about 50 other RTGs. The draft EA is now expected in July 2001.

• **SRS High Level Waste Tank (HLW) Closure (DOE/EIS-0303)** The proposed action is to close the SRS HLW

Tanks in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, DOE Orders and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control permit requirements. The draft environmental impact statement (EIS) was released in November 2000. Public meetings were held in January 2001. The final EIS is expected in June 2001.

• **Disposition of Scrap Metals from Radiological Areas** DOE will evaluate alternatives for disposition of scrap metals from DOE sites that may have been in radiological areas. The disposition options to be analyzed include continuation of the suspension on unrestricted release of metals for recycling, and unrestricted release of scrap metals. The Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS is expected this month with scoping meetings in May.

• **SRS Salt Processing Alternatives Draft Supplemental EIS (DOE/EIS-0082-S2)** The proposed action is to construct and operate a process to replace In-Tank Precipitation as part of the SRS High Level Waste Management System. The draft SEIS was distributed in March 2001. Public meetings are planned for May 1 at the North Augusta Community Center and May 3 at the Holiday Inn Coliseum. Repeat sessions will be held at 1 and 5 p.m. The public comment period will remain open until May 14. The final SEIS is expected in June 2001.

• **Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Waste at Yucca Mountain (DOE/EIS-0250)** This EIS will assess the potential environmental impacts from construction, operation, and closure of a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)-licensed geologic repository for disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste. The draft EIS was released in August 1999. The final EIS is expected in late 2001.

Long-term stewardship report available to the public

The Department of Energy (DOE) has prepared its most comprehensive report to date on its anticipated long-term stewardship obligations for sites that will continue to have residual wastes or contamination after cleanup has been completed. The *Report to Congress: Long-Term Stewardship* (January 2001) recognizes that:

- DOE has been, and intends to continue, performing waste cleanup to standards that do not allow for unrestrictive land use (e.g., industrial or recreational) in most cases;
- Even if unrestricted land use were to be sought, it is often technically and economically infeasible;

- Consequently, long-term stewardship will be required for many years into the future; and
- Given the need for long-term stewardship to ensure the continued effectiveness of cleanup work DOE intends to establish reliable management plans to carry out the long-term stewardship mission.

For electronic copies of this report, please visit the long-term stewardship information center website at <http://its.apps.em.doe.gov/center/>. A limited number of hard copies are available upon request. Please contact Jim Moore at the address listed on the back of the *Bulletin*.

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Aiken, S.C. 29808



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For more information on this or other
environmental and compliance activities at
SRS, please contact:

Jim Moore	Donna K. Martin
Westinghouse Savannah	Westinghouse Savannah
River Company	River Company
Aiken, S.C. 29808	Public Involvement
(800) 249-8155	(803) 725-7169
e-mail: jim02.moore@srs.gov	

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[http://www.SRS.GOV/general/srenviro/
envbul/ebinex.htm](http://www.SRS.GOV/general/srenviro/envbul/ebinex.htm)