

SOUTH CAROLINA NUCLEAR ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

(approved 9/15/05)

June 9, 2005

Room 209 Gressette Building
Columbia, South Carolina

Members present: Chairman – Mr. Ben Rusche, The Honorable Greg Ryberg, The Honorable Robert Perry, Dr. Carolyn Hudson, Dr. Vincent Van Brunt, Mr. Bill Mottel, Dr. David Peterson, and Mr. Steve Byrne

Staff present: Ms. D’Juana Wilson, Mr. Michael Hughes

I. Welcome and Opening Comments

The Governor’s Nuclear Advisory Council convened on June 9, 2005, at 1:45 PM. Mr. Ben Rusche, Chairman of the Council, called the meeting to order and welcomed the speakers and guests.

II. Approval of Minutes, March 3, 2005, meeting

Mr. Bill Mottel moved to approve the minutes from the March 3, 2005, meeting. Dr. Vincent Van Brunt offered the following corrections: 1) change “Vince” to “Vincent”; and 2) change “Section 31-15” to “Section 3116”. He then seconded the motion to approve the minutes, as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Update on the Salt Waste Treatment Program DOE/SRS

Mr. Charles A. Hansen, Assistant Manager for Waste Disposition Project, US DOE/SRS, joined by Ms. Ginger Dickert, from Westinghouse, updated the Council members on the Salt Waste Treatment Program at the Savannah River Site (SRS). Mr. Hansen reported

that they are on track with getting the Salt Waste Processing Facility (SWPF) designed and built; however, there are still outstanding questions about the design with the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB). There was an independent review done of the hazards and design criteria for containing those hazards, but there is not yet a definitive resolution of those issues. He reported that they are continuing with final design and have not stopped any work on the project while they are resolving with the DNFSB the final questions. He stated that the Board has raised issues that DOE standards for protecting workers are not sufficient. This is because the staff contracts individuals to examine the specific hazards and make determinations on their own as to what the controls should be for the workers. In this case, for seismic events, the DNFSB is concerned that there is not sufficient containment during seismic events to protect the workers. He stated that SRS has taken the position that the design and control is highly conservative in protecting the work force; however, the questions will be resolved with the Board. He stated that there is potential for small delays to the project.

There was a brief discussion regarding rigid requirements for control standards. Mr. Hansen reported that this facility is designed so that if all control barriers were to fail, in the worse accident possible in a seismic event, the 50 year dose to a member of the public would be 50 millirem. He said that each of us, on the average, picks up about 360 millirem per year just due to background and natural things in the environment. He said that the site is very conservative with regard to public protection. The question is whether the workers close to the facility are going to receive a substantial dose, and the Department has not established specific dose limits. After a brief discussion he said that this is a national issue that the Department will resolve for facilities.

Mr. Hansen then reported that the National Academy of Science (NAS) has been to the site on two occasions as part of Senator Graham's legislation to look at activities with regard to both salt disposition and tank closure. There has been good communication with the NAS and they anticipate issuing a report on June 14, 2005. NAS will give Congress a full report on SRS in July 2005. He concluded that there has been a good exchange over the past few years with NAS and there is a good understanding of what is being done at the site and why.

Ms. Ginger Dickert then reported on the waste disposition efforts. She stated that since the last report to the Council when they were at the early states of implementing new legislation, Section 3116 of the 2005 National Defense Authorization Act. She reported that a lot of progress has been made. The first Waste Determination in its draft form has been issued to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for their review. This is the first one for the DOE complex. It is setting the precedent in content, format and the manner of interaction with the NRC. She explained the process that is being used and said that the entire process solicits as much public involvement as possible. The public comment period began April 1, 2005, and closed May 31, 2005. Comments were received and they will be dispositioned. She stated that the NRC on May 31, 2005, also issued their request for additional information. This is a standard process they go through in the review of documents. They met with the NRC to address the needs and address the requests for information and are on track to provide the information back to the NRC by July 1, 2005. She reported that NRC expects to issue a final report by August 31, 2005. The Department will then take that and it will go through a review and the final waste

determination will be issued. This will be a milestone, and at that point, they will continue the permitting activities with the State of South Carolina and SC DHEC.

She then said that the site activities related to construction of the facilities are continuing. The initial batch of material of the first dissolved salt was transferred from the first tank, Tank 41, to the feed batching tank. In addition, there have been two subsequent dissolutions. After a brief discussion, she said that they continue to make progress forward in working with NRC, DOE headquarters and SC DHEC.

Mr. Byrne asked about the issue of tank space being critical. Ms. Dickert reported that there is an issue with tank space, and there was a discussion regarding the plan for tank closure and tank space. Mr. Rusche stated that the Council looks forward to continuing the relationship and communication regarding the site.

They also discussed issues regarding Tank 48 and Ms. Dickert reported that test results are promising. She stated that prior to the next meeting the testing will be concluded and there will be another update to the Council at that time.

III. Acceptance of Barnwell Committee Report

Mr. Byrne reported that the paper on the Barnwell Committee has been amended to include comments and the amended paper is on the web site. He pointed out that he will amend this again to include a footnote to identify classes of waste. He made a motion to endorse the paper from the Barnwell Committee, with amendments. There were no additional comments and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. Disposition of Excess Pu – NNSA – DCA

Mr. Paul Longstreet, Mr. Ken Bromberg and Mr. Sterling Franks reported to the Council on plutonium disposition. [Please click here for a copy of their presentation.](#) There was a brief discussion following the presentation.

Mr. Rusche then recognized Mr. Bruce Wilson and his colleagues who have updated the Council in the past. It was stated that the SRS is an asset on the national level and there was a brief discussion regarding proliferation. It was noted that the skills that helped the United States win the Cold War are the same skills needed now for proliferation with the current threat of nuclear terrorism.

It was reported that from the defense side, there is more interest in skills to support programs coming up with the tritium extraction facility due to start up next year. They are on track and running about 10 months ahead of the baseline schedule. The NNSA office is keeping their eye on the site on the unique assets of the site. Mr. Rusche invited them to come to future meetings.

V. SR Historical Plans – SC Heritage Foundation

Mr. Walt Joseph and Mr. Todd Crawford presented to the Council the SRS Heritage Foundation, Inc., Historical Plans. They discussed the vision, background and programmatic agreement before going into the architectural study and other aspects of the plan. [Please click here for a copy of the presentation.](#) There was a brief discussion following the presentation and Mr. Mottel commended the Foundation for a wonderful program with great potential.

VI. Update on Barnwell Re-licensing

Mr. Henry Porter reported that DHEC is still in the process of the appeal of the license that was renewed for Chem-Nuclear about a year ago for the Barnwell site. There was a hearing in February the attorneys are preparing their final proposed orders for the Administrative Law Judge by June 14, 2005. The Administrative Law Judge will render his decision at some point after that date. He said that Chem-Nuclear is allowed to operate under the current license and the conditions of that license. There was no additional discussion following this update.

VII. Comments and Questions from Audience

Mr. Ernie Chapputt – Economic Development Partnership, Aiken, South Carolina, addressed the Council. He gave the Council an update on recent developments. He said that the Department of Energy (DOE) has a program called 2010, which basically is designed to take a look at NRC's new licensing processes. This process is designed to speed up the process of licensing power plants. This program is in place and has not been tested. DOE has issued several contracts to go and test the licensing process on a cost share basis. NuStart, LLC, has contacted the Economic Development Partnership (EDP), and they are going through a site selection process for design and construction of a nuclear power plant. NuStart has asked the EDP to provide a proposal to them to have one of the two locations be on the Savannah River Site. He then discussed the concept that EDP had for a private sector energy park on the SRS, which has been presented to DOE. He then discussed the efforts of EDP to evaluate the licensing of a commercial nuclear power plant for electrical generation production. The EDP is leading the efforts to evaluate the request and put together the appropriate responses. In the process of

doing that they are talking to a variety of groups. EDP is expected to have a proposal by mid August. There was additional discussion regarding meetings around the state regarding this issue and Nu Start's request.

Mr. Chapputt said that Barnwell is an important asset to the nuclear industry in South Carolina and they are happy to see the Council's interest in the site. Mr. Rusche thanked Mr. Chapputt for his update on this issue.

Mary Kelly, Ph.D., League of Women Voters, commented that the League of Women Voters has been involved in the nuclear waste issues in South Carolina since the early 80's. They have conducted extensive educational efforts so that the general public will understand and have an effective voice in important policy decisions. With the proponents of the provisions in the state's most recent energy legislation that re-established the Governor's Nuclear Advisory Council, they think the Council serves a valuable purpose as a reviewer of nuclear policy and a body that considers the impact of federal and commercial nuclear actions on the health and safety of the people of this state. They hope that South Carolina's role as a national repository of nuclear waste at all levels is minimum and finally ended. She stated that the group commends the Council on efforts relating to the study of Barnwell operations. She also addressed the position of the group on the re-payment of the Extended Care Fund by the legislature. After additional comments, Ms. Kelly submitted the [attached letter](#) and asked that it be made a part of the file.

There being no further business Mr. Rusche called the meeting adjourned.