

SOUTH CAROLINA NUCLEAR ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

August 27, 2003

1:30 PM, 1201 Main Street, 6th Floor
MMO Conference Room
Columbia, South Carolina

Members present: Chairman - Mr. Ben Rusche, Dr. Carolyn Hudson, Ms. Kate Billing, Dr. Vince Van Brunt, Mr. Bill Mottel, Dr. David Peterson, and Mr. Steve Byrne

The Governor's Nuclear Advisory Council convened on Wednesday, August 27, 2003, at 1:30 PM. Mr. Ben Rusche, Chairman of the Council, called the meeting to order and welcomed the guests. He formally announced that he has been appointed the new Chairman of the Council. He also introduced two new members of the Council, Dr. David Peterson and Mr. Bill Mottel. Mr. Rusche distributed copies of the Act that established the Nuclear Advisory Council to all members, and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to introduce everyone and establish priorities for the new Council.

Mr. Rusche stated that the first item of business should be to formally recognize the work of two former members of the Council. He then asked for concurrence of the Council to write letters to Dr. John Stucker, former Chairman, and Mr. Jim Navritil, former member, thanking them for their contributions to the Council. The members agreed and Mr. Rusche said he would prepare the letters.

Mr. Rusche then discussed the importance of open communication among Council members. He also reviewed how the Council has conducted meetings in the past, including meeting procedures, locations, site visits, and the way that items are developed for meeting agendas. He stated he'd like to have one more meeting by December 31, 2003.

Mr. Rusche mentioned that a group called the Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) is another besides the Nuclear Advisory Council that can provide valuable information to citizens and policymakers. He explained that most major DOE sites have a CAB. The SRS CAB was recently notified by Jesse Roberson, Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management at DOE, that funding for the CAB can no longer be used for any purpose but a DOE purpose. The CAB meets six times a year, often in different parts of state, to inform the public of issues at the site and solicit feedback. CAB members are worried that limiting reimbursement to DOE employees only will limit public participation in the group, and water down the message. Mr. Rusche wants the minutes to reflect that the NAC is aware of the issue, and is concerned that this action may cause CAB conclusions to be controlled by DOE, which is contrary to the notion of responsible advisory inputs.

The Council then discussed previous NAC meetings at Savannah River Site, VC Summer Station and Westinghouse, and logistics for arranging future meetings. Mr. Rusche expressed an interest in arranging a meeting or conducting a site

visit to the Barnwell facility, as the Council has an interest in many issues there, especially regarding the extended care fund. The Council agreed. Mr. Rusche also noted that visiting the different power reactors in the state might also be informative to for Council members. Mr. Byrne agreed.

The Council discussed Yucca Mountain licensing issues, and Mr. Rusche stated that the Council has been following this issue closely and will continue to do so. They briefly discussed a visit to Yucca Mountain.

Mr. Rusche stated that the Council needed to be conscious of communication with various environmental groups, and the need to be well-informed of issues in the environmental community. A detailed discussion regarding general concerns of environmentalists ensued. Ms. Billing suggested that environmental groups be invited to make formal presentations to the Council in the future, rather than ad-hoc commentary at the end of meetings. Mr. Rusche concurred, and also noted that direct outreach to environmental groups is often an effective means of communicating, as well. He asked that Dr. Hudson, Ms. Billing and Mr. Mottel assist in keeping tabs on environmental concerns.

Dr. Van Brunt suggested that the Council should invite a representative from the State Homeland Security Office to update them on what is being done at nuclear plant sites.

Mr. Rusche stated that SRS would be a continuing item on the Council's agenda. He said that the SRS committee formed under the previous council includes him, Dr. Van Brunt and Dr. Hudson, and would continue the work begun under Governor Hodges. With no objections from the members, Mr. Rusche invited Mr. Mottel to be a part of this committee, as well. A detailed discussion of SRS issues followed, with a heavy emphasis on the Department of Energy's desire for accelerated disposition of high-level waste at the site.

At this point, Dr. Van Brunt asked that the record reflect his strong belief that an alternative schedule to grout and glass must be developed as a viable alternative for cesium and strontium partition. He feels that such an alternative may offer an opportunity for accelerating the disposition schedule, and reduce the costs associated with sequestering nuclear waste and partitioning it into different components.

Following this, the Council discussed the role of DOE's new Office of Legacy Waste Management, and that it is imperative that we all find ways to deal with the nuclear waste issue in this generation. Mr. Rusche stated that in general, high level waste should be interred in a deep geologic repository as envisioned in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, and that "incidental" waste shouldn't be left at SRS. He wants the Council to provide the Governor a conceptual framework for understanding of this issue. He concluded by stating that as outlined in the

Nuclear Waste Policy Act, those who benefit from nuclear technology should be the ones to pay for the costs of managing it.

Next, Mr. Rusche said that the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory was an excellent environmental resource that the Council had not yet used. This is a joint effort between South Carolina, Georgia and DOE. He stated they have done some landmark research in respect to the SRS and its impact on the environment, and it may be an advantage for the Council to hear from them in the future. Dr. Hudson mentioned that a tour of the environmental lab would be valuable for the Council.

Mr. Rusche asked that everyone take a moment to review the minutes from the February 6, 2003, meeting. After reviewing the minutes, Dr. Hudson made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Ms. Billing and unanimously approved.

Mr. Rusche thanked everyone for coming and the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.