



**Department of Energy**  
Washington, DC 20585

MAY 21 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR TERREL SPEARS  
ASSISTANT MANAGER  
FOR WASTE DISPOSITION PROJECT  
SAVANNAH RIVER OPERATIONS OFFICE

FROM: MARK A. GILBERTSON  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
FOR SITE RESTORATION

SUBJECT: Disposal Authorization Statement for the Savannah River Site  
Saltstone Disposal Facility

The Low-Level Waste Disposal Facility Federal Review Group (LFRG) has conducted a review of the Savannah River Site (SRS) Saltstone Disposal Facility (SDF) 2009 performance assessment (PA) in accordance with the requirements of Department of Energy Manual 435.1-1 (DOE M 435.1-1) to allow SRS to continue operations of the SDF using the newly designed disposal cells (cylindrical instead of rectangular). In addition to the PA, the LFRG also reviewed the composite analysis (CA), monitoring plan, closure plan, PA/CA maintenance plan, and additional analyses conducted in response to comments received by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). An additional sensitivity analysis case to the base case model, prepared by SRS in response to a request by NRC, was also reviewed. .

An independent review of the PA was performed by a review team of subject matter experts chartered by the LFRG. The Compliance Evaluation (CE) (attachment 1) was prepared by the LFRG based on the input from the review team report and expert opinions of the LFRG membership. The LFRG used the review team report and the CE to develop the revised Disposal Authorization Statement (DAS) (attachment 2).

I accept the LFRG's recommendation that the PA and associated technical information is appropriate for the issuance of the DAS. Therefore, the SRS is authorized to continue operations of the SDF and initiate the disposal of salt waste in the newly designed disposal cells. Failure by SRS to comply with the conditions should be reported by SRS to the LFRG Co-Chair, and based upon the resulting recommendation to me, could result in revocation of the authorization and immediate shutdown of the disposal facility. Please note the conditions of approval defined in the revised DAS must be satisfied by SRS to assure continued authorization of the facility. The required plan for maintenance





of the PA should be revised to include resolution of the unresolved secondary issues identified by the review team. Resolution of the issues is to be reported to the LFRG by annual reports or other written communication. If any revisions to the attached DAS are considered necessary, it is important that your office notify the LFRG of the proposed revisions as SRS must comply with the requirements and conditions delineated in the DAS.

This DAS is being issued under DOE M 435.1-1. In parallel, DOE will respond to NRC's April 30, 2012, Letter of Concern and "Technical Evaluation Report for the 2009 Performance Assessment from the Saltstone Facility at the Savannah River Site", issued under section 3116(b) of the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2005. That response will be developed prior to disposal of treated salt waste in the new vaults at SDF, and will include additional information and a sensitivity analysis that addresses the NRC comments.

If your staff has any questions regarding this action or the process for working with the LFRG on meeting the conditions in the DAS, please feel free to contact me or Mr. Martin Letourneau, Co-Chair of the LFRG, at (301) 903-3532.

#### Attachments

cc: S. Ross, SRS  
P. Suggs, SRS  
F. Marcinowski, EM-30  
A. Edelman, EM-32  
M. Letourneau, EM-11  
L. Suttora, EM-11 w/attachments  
M. O'Dell, EM-11 w/attachments  
D. Gray, EM-11 w/attachments