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Good afternoon, I am Suzanne Rhodes representing the League of Women Voters of South Carolina. The League is a nonpartisan political organization that works to increase understanding of major public policy issues. We are very concerned about public policy issues associated with this proposal.

We have been watching, with concern, those aging waste tanks at SRS for over 3 decades. We oppose SRS receiving foreign wastes for a variety of reasons. In addition to the obvious issues of delayed site cleanup, the leaking waste tanks, and the aging H basin, there is the lack of any disposition plan. We, unlike many of you, are very pessimistic that the Yucca Mountain site will ever receive nuclear wastes. In the interim we support local appropriate on-site planning, preparation, and storage of existing wastes. We hope that communities around the country with wastes will eventually be able to force a permanent solution. Until then, many nuclear interests seem to think that "the problem with Yucca Mountain is Harry Reid," and SRS would be a "temporary" solution.

We all know that the US highway budget is currently underfunded to the tune of about \$8-9 Billion dollars. The Yucca Mountain site would require that amount to enable railroad connections, and another \$8-9 Billion for the titanium drip shield to keep the water & wastes isolated (hopefully). That's obviously \$16-18 Billion, in addition to whatever it would cost to extend the current 5-7 miles of tunnels and other preparatory and repair work. State opposition includes a series of governors and attorneys general – It is way more than Harry Reid.

I was very impressed with Tom Clements Scoping Comments on the DOE EA for acceptance and so-called disposition of German fuel, which is experimental commercial, and not research fuel. Together these German reactors produced electricity for about 25 years, off and on. It was originally managed and produced for municipal electric utilities and later by the state-owned energy company. The US has closed over 50 reactors. Although much has been learned from many of these reactor operations, we do not call them research reactors, and neither should the Germans. Anyone supporting SRS as a receiving site for this fuel would benefit by reading Tom's submission, which can be found at [SRSwatch.org](http://SRSwatch.org). If it is found inaccurate in spots, those issues should be addressed factually as part of the comment process, which ends July 21.<sup>st</sup>

LWVUS is very supportive of non-proliferation policies. LWVSC does not see this as non-proliferation proposal, but instead a strategy to enable SRS to become an international dump. Several important public policy issues would be compromised.

To highlight Tom's remarks about compromised policies:

- This proposal does not observe the **EU directives** and regulations agreed to under the European Atomic Energy Community (**EURATOM**) and nuclear waste management practice agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (**IAEA**) – and Tom cites them in more detail than you want me to address today.
- It is illegal for Germany to Export Spent Fuel for Reprocessing: Intermediate storage of spent fuel is the only step in practice in Germany today.
- EURATOM established a European Community standard for management of spent fuel and radioactive waste with the aim of ensuring a high level of safety, avoiding undue burdens on future generations and enhancing transparency. The DOE/German proposal ignores these practices.
- Possible Violation of the **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**. The commercial deal to ship the spent fuel to SRS poses a dilemma for both the US and Germany as far as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) goes. A violation of the NPT, designed to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons materials, is brewing if any shipment of the spent fuel takes place or if a new reprocessing technique is developed as a result of the proposal. **H-Canyon at SRS is not licensed by NRC, and not Safeguarded by the IAEA.**

- SRS Citizens Advisory Board (**SRS CAB**), a federal advisory panel on SRS clean up, went on record in July 2013 against bringing commercial spent fuel to the site. The position statement concludes: "The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board wants the Department of Energy to know that it is opposed the use of SRS as a site for interim storage of spent nuclear fuel from commercial nuclear reactors." Although this was primarily addressing spent fuel from US reactors there has been concern expressed by CAB members about bringing foreign nuclear waste.

SRS Watch Conclusions, which the League finds compelling:

- SRS has a huge amount of nuclear waste that it is struggling to deal with, and it has not been demonstrated that it can deal with a large amount of graphite waste. No additional nuclear waste must come into the site, especially foreign commercial spent fuel. The public does not want SRS to become a national or international nuclear dump and does not want the current high-level waste management plan to be sidetracked by dealing with imported nuclear waste materials.
- **Shipment of power reactor fuel from Germany for reprocessing and disposal is illegal.**
- **The "no action alternative" of leaving the spent fuel in Germany for Germany to manage is the best option from an environmental and proliferation perspective. The U.S. should offer to help Germany, if need be and if requested, to deploy storage and disposal methods in Germany.**



**Statement to South Carolina Governor's Nuclear Advisory Council**

**Tom Clements, Director, Savannah River Site Watch ([www.srswatch.org](http://www.srswatch.org)), July 10, 2014, Columbia, SC**

There were several issues of concern discussed at the meeting today. Two matters are of primary concern: status of the high-level waste management program at Savannah River Site and delays to it and the import of highly radioactive commercial spent fuel from Germany.

On the high-level nuclear waste issue, it is of growing concern that the schedule for the closure of aging waste storage tanks continues to slip due to financial and technical issues. Given the environmental and health risks involved with this program, it merits the closest of scrutiny by the Governor's Nuclear Advisory Council, politicians at all levels and the public. DOE needs to refocus its efforts on this program and not continue to be side-tracked by the plutonium fuel (MOX) boondoggle or by repeated efforts to bring high-level nuclear waste (spent fuel) to the site for storage and/or processing.

The proposal to bring spent fuel from two commercial prototype nuclear reactors in Germany for processing and storage is not the future we want to see for the Savannah River Site. Conceived in secrecy, the program is now hitting obstacles of public opinion and political opposition both in Germany and the United States, and rightly so. See Savannah River Site Watch for much more information on the issue: [www.srswatch.org](http://www.srswatch.org).

The proposal, as we have seen from the Department of Energy presentation, would result in high-level nuclear waste being left at SRS in "storage awaiting repository." DOE itself has thus validated that we are at risk of being a long-term storage site for the German spent fuel. Disposal of spent fuel at SRS is not legal as spent fuel, under law, is required to go to a geologic repository. Claims by DOE or German entities that the spent fuel would be brought to SRS for "disposal" are misleading. Rest assured the public and politicians in Germany are being made aware that SRS is not a disposal site and that the import negatively impacts SRS clean up.

The export of the spent fuel from Germany, as I have outlined in my comments submitted to DOE - <http://tinyurl.com/qxvllql> - is illegal as German law prohibits the export of spent fuel for processing and disposal. The effort 25 years after the AVR and THTR-300 experimental power reactor were closed to rebrand them as "research" reactors is proceeding but I predict that effort will fail. DOE should simply halt its review of the import of the German spent fuel and terminate the "environmental assessment" process.

DOE claims that 900 kg of highly enriched uranium are in the graphite fuel balls but this is misleading as this was the amount of HEU originally supplied. For the AVR spent fuel, only a small amount of HEU remains and the amount of HEU in the THTR spent fuel has been greatly reduced. Also, some of the uranium in some spent fuel balls may be low-enriched uranium of German origin. Thus, the biggest proliferation risk with the proposal may be the development of a new graphite fuel reprocessing technique to be applied in an unsafeguarded reprocessing plant. China and Russia will be watching with interest. Additionally, the speculative threat of import to SRS of US spent graphite fuel from the closed reactors at Fort. St. Vrain and Peach Bottom has other negative waste management implications for SRS.

I am submitting various items for the GNAC record on the German waste import:

- *Plan to ship German nuclear waste to SC questioned*, Greenville News, July 9
- *New German waste another bad signal*, Aiken (SC) Standard editorial, July 7, 2014
- *Don't dump this on us*, Augusta (GA) Chronicle editorial, July 6, 2014
- *Don't bring more nuclear waste to SRS*, Greenville (SC) News editorial, May 1, 2014
- Response to a question posed by a member of the German Bundestag, establishing that a number of municipalities owned the AVR commercial nuclear power-producing reactor, April 15, 2014





**Department of Energy**  
Savannah River Operations Office  
P.O. Box A  
Aiken, South Carolina 29802

**JAN 13 2014**

**CERTIFIED MAIL  
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

Mr. Tom Clements  
Friends of the Earth  
1112 Florence Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. Clements:

**SUBJECT: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Headquarters HQ-2014-00169-F/  
Savannah River Operations Office SRO-2014-00316-F**

This is our first partial response to your October 30, 2013 FOIA request to Department of Energy Headquarters (DOE-HQ). DOE-HQ transferred your FOIA request to this office for action. You asked for copies of:

1. Any documents, assessments or reports (and attachments) prepared by DOE's Office of Environmental Management, Savannah River Site or Savannah River National Laboratory concerning management and disposal of the AVR fuel.
2. Any documents, assessments or reports (and attachments) prepared by the above entities concerning the ability of the H-Canyon, including via modifications, to process the graphite AVR fuel. This request covers documents on the handling of any HEU removed from the fuel and management of resultant waste streams, including impacts to the SRS high-level waste system.
3. Any "trip reports" filed by DOE employees or contractors who traveled to the Juelich site.

The documents shown on the enclosed Index List are partially responsive to your request. Since DOE Headquarters (HQ) originated Documents 001 through 002 and 004 through 006, we are transferring these documents to DOE-HQ for a release determination. If you have any questions regarding the documents, please contact Mr. Alexander Morris, FOIA Officer, DOE Headquarters, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20505. You may also contact Mr. Morris at (202) 586-5955.

JAN 13 2014

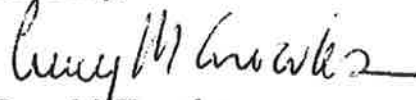
Mr. Tom Clements

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Based on your justification for a fee waiver, DOE-SR is waiving all allowable fees associated with the processing of your request.

As Chief Counsel, DOE-SR, I am the authorizing official for documents responsive to this request. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Pauline Conner at (803) 952-8134. The facsimile number for this office is (803) 952-8571.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lucy M. Knowles", written in a cursive style.

Lucy M. Knowles  
Authorizing Official

Enclosures  
Index List and Requested Documents

# 1<sup>st</sup> Responsive Document 003



**Bundesministerium  
für Bildung  
und Forschung**

POSTANSCHRIFT: Der Bundesrat für Deutschland Bonn, 53170 Bonn

**Mr Thomas P. D'Agostino**  
Under Secretary for Nuclear Security  
NA-1  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20585  
USA

**Dr. Georg Schütte**  
State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Education  
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DATUM: Bonn, February 27, 2012

*Copy to*

**Mr David Huizenga**  
Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management  
EM-1  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585

**Ms Anne Harrington**  
Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation  
NA-20  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585

**Dr. William F. Brinkman**  
Director of the Office of Science  
U.S. Department of Energy  
SC-1/Forrestal Building  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Translation

Dear Mr D'Agostino,

A number of research reactors and pilot and experimental facilities were built and operated in previous years under the German Federal Government's research and development projects for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is responsible for the decommissioning and dismantling of these facilities. One example is the AVR experimental reactor at Research Centre Jülich (FZJ), a formerly graphite-moderated pebble bed reactor which is currently

being dismantled. In this project, the BMBF is representing the Federal Government as the majority partner within FZJ.

In this context, officials from German reactors met with Ms Anne Harrington (NNSA) and Mr David Huizenga (DOE-BM) in Washington, D.C. on December 6, 2011 to discuss the possible return of graphite-based nuclear fuels of U.S. origin.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany supports the reactor operators' approach. We therefore welcome that the U.S. Department of Energy offered to consider the option of acceptance of nuclear fuel that originally contained approximately 900kg of highly enriched uranium from the U.S.

~~Should it be possible to reach a decision before the forthcoming nuclear security summit in Seoul, this would certainly benefit the debate at the meeting.~~

Thank you for your support. We will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely yours,

signed: Dr. Georg Schütte



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# **Statement of Intent**

**between**

**the Federal Ministry of Education and Research  
of the Federal Republic of Germany**

**and**

**the Ministry for Innovation, Science and Research of the State of North  
Rhine-Westphalia on behalf of the North Rhine-Westphalian State Government**

**the Department of Energy of the United States of America**

**for the Proposed Use of Savannah River Site Facilities  
for Disposition of German Research Reactor Pebble Bed Fuel**

## **I. Background**

1. The Department of Energy (DOE) of the United States of America, in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Ministry for Innovation, Science and Research of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia on behalf of the North Rhine-Westphalian State Government (hereinafter collectively “the Participants”), is considering the feasibility of DOE acceptance of graphite-based spent nuclear fuel that contains United States-origin highly enriched uranium (HEU) and has been determined to have been irradiated in Germany for research and development purposes (hereinafter “the German Research Reactor Pebble Bed Fuel” or “the fuel”), and disposition of the fuel using DOE facilities at the Savannah River Site (SRS), near Aiken, South Carolina.
2. DOE’s acceptance of the fuel would support the United States’ HEU minimization policy objective of seeking to reduce, and eventually to eliminate, HEU from civil commerce by removing United States-origin HEU from Germany and returning it to the United States for safe storage and disposition, and converting it into a form no longer usable for a nuclear weapon or an improvised nuclear material dispersal device. Disposition of the fuel would also contribute to the objectives of the Nuclear Security Summit in 2014.
3. The fuel under consideration is coated HEU/thorium fuel kernels embedded in a spherical graphite matrix used in the early research and development of pebble bed reactors.

- 
4. DOE is considering the feasibility of using H-Canyon facilities at SRS to chemically remove the graphite from the fuel kernels. Based on positive results of research and development done to date, it appears technically feasible to utilize the H-Canyon facilities at SRS to chemically remove the graphite from the fuel kernels by using a molten salt technique being developed by the Savannah River National Laboratory. The remaining fuel kernels could then be processed through the H-Canyon system for disposition.
  5. In consideration of the foregoing, the Participants express their willingness to engage in cooperation with the aim of creating the necessary prerequisites no later than the first quarter of 2015 for conclusion of an appropriate legal framework for returning the fuel to the United States.

## II. Planned Cooperation

The Participants intend to take the following actions as soon as possible.

1. DOE (or its contractors) is/are to conduct any reviews and work required by United States law for acceptance of the fuel and its processing and disposition. This includes compliance with all applicable requirements of the United States National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Participants share the conviction that a NEPA review should start as soon as possible.
2. The NEPA review is to include preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) to analyze the potential environmental consequences of the proposed acceptance, processing, and disposition of the fuel, and providing notice of DOE's intent to prepare an EA to the States of Georgia and South Carolina, and the general public, and publication of such notice in the United States' *Federal Register*. The EA is to inform DOE's decision whether to issue a finding of no significant impact, which would conclude the NEPA review, or prepare a more detailed environmental impact statement.
3. DOE intends to undertake other activities mutually decided by the Participants, including additional technical and engineering work, and project management, in order for DOE to reach a decision on the proposed acceptance, processing, and disposition of the German Research Reactor Pebble Bed Fuel. The NEPA review and the activities necessary to support NEPA described in this paragraph constitute the preparatory phase.
4. *Forschungszentrum Jülich* (FZJ) is to bear the costs of the preparatory phase work and, if there is a decision to proceed with the project, the costs associated with the acceptance, processing, and disposition of the fuel. DOE and FZJ should finalize as soon as possible a contract for completion of the preparatory phase. If there is a decision to proceed with the project, the terms and conditions for acceptance, processing, and disposition of the fuel should be set forth in a contract, including provisions to be applied in the event of premature termination of the project.

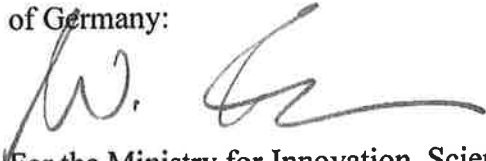
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### III. General Considerations

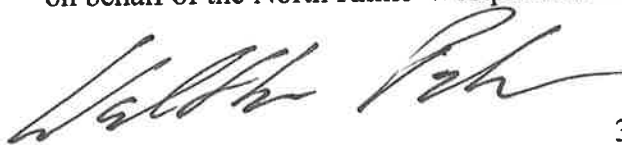
1. Cooperative activities under this Statement of Intent are to commence immediately after signature by the Participants.
2. Each Participant is to conduct the activities contemplated by this Statement of Intent in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations and any international agreements to which its government is a party.
3. Cooperative activities under this Statement of Intent are subject to the availability of funds, personnel, and other resources.
4. This Statement of Intent does not create any legally binding obligations between or among the Participants.
5. This Statement of Intent may be revised at any time in writing by the Participants' mutual consent in writing.
6. The Participants may discontinue this Statement of Intent at any time. A Participant that decides to discontinue its participation in the activities under this Statement of Intent should provide prompt advance notice in writing to the other Participants.
7. Any decision by the Participants to proceed with the transportation of the fuel for storage, processing, and disposition depends upon compliance with all applicable requirements of United States law and DOE requirements, including NEPA, and resolution by the Participants of any technical, financial, and legal issues that may be identified during consideration of the feasibility of the project and development of an appropriate legal framework.

Signed in three originals, at Washington on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of *March* 2014 and at Bonn on the *01.* day of *April* 2014.

For the Federal Ministry of Education  
and Research of the Federal Republic  
of Germany:



For the Ministry for Innovation, Science and Research  
of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia  
on behalf of the North Rhine-Westphalian State Government:



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For the Department of Energy  
of the United States of America:

*Ag S. M. L.*

# Plan to ship German nuke waste to SC questioned



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7:18 p.m. EDT July 9, 2014

Plan to ship German nuclear waste to South Carolina might not be legal, as government officials try to depict highly radioactive material as the product of research and not fuel used for profit, nuclear watchdogs say.

[Germany may ship nuke waste to SC \(/story/news/environment/2014/04/29/germany-may-ship-nuke-waste-460167/\)](#)

Nuclear waste — nearly a ton of highly enriched uranium the government says originated in the United States — would be shipped across the Atlantic from Germany to the port of Charleston, then transported by train to the Savannah River Site, according to plans released by the Department of Energy.

The proposal — three years in the making and opened for public comment until later this month with a decision due sometime next year — would fulfill an obligation the United States has through its treaties to reduce the proliferation of material that could be used as weapons, the DOE says.

(Photo: Staff file)

The department — responsible for operation of the facility in Aiken that once was used to produce nuclear weapons during the Cold War — believes that considering acceptance of the waste is appropriate "because, among other reasons, it was used for early research and development purposes," SRS spokesman Jim Giusti said.

"If a decision is made to accept the fuel, DOE's acceptance of the fuel will be in accordance with all applicable legal requirements," Giusti said.

However, longtime nuclear watchdog Tom Clements, leader of an environmental group that monitors SRS dealings, said that the reactors using the fuel were once plugged into Germany's electrical grid and had long been characterized in government documents as experimental commercial reactors.

The problem, Clements told *The Greenville News*, is that German law has prohibited the export of spent nuclear fuel generated by commercial means.

"They're trying to redefine the reactors as being research reactors 25 years after they closed," Clements said. "It's kind of sadly humorous. The Germans don't know how to remove that stuff, so basically we're trying to figure out how to remove it."

The plans, first reported by *The News* in April following the release of public documents have become a political issue in the race for governor.

Democratic State Sen. Vincent Sheheen, who is challenging Republican Gov. Nikki Haley, has toured the lower part of the state in recent weeks calling for the plans to be killed, accusing the governor of not standing up for the state's interests in not becoming a nuclear dumping ground.

Haley spokesman Doug Mayer didn't address questions about whether the governor supports shipping the German waste to SRS, but he said that "no one has fought harder" to get waste removed from SRS.

The governor's Nuclear Advisory Council is scheduled to meet Thursday afternoon. A published agenda includes an update on the German shipment plan.

The issue has come to the forefront in recent months as more details are released.

The League of Women Voters has joined environmental groups in opposing the shipment, which they say would amount to South Carolina becoming the dumping ground for waste from across the world.

The shipments, which would generate millions of dollars in research and development, have the support of energy officials, nuclear industry retirees and area chambers of commerce.

The federal government has promised for decades and spent billions to build a permanent disposal site in Yucca Mountain in the remote Nevada desert, but the project was mothballed once President Obama came into office.

If German waste were to be shipped to SRS, there is no guarantee that it would ever leave, and it could open the door to calls by some to use SRS as an "interim storage" site for America's commercial spent fuel, League of Women Voters spokeswoman Suzanne Rhodes said.

"In the interim, South Carolina citizens should be able to clearly understand that any international wastes received at SRS are a result of non-proliferation necessity or the political instability of the exporting country, not the simple convenience of the country of origin," Rhodes said.

Refer a Friend <sup>x</sup>

In May 2011 — two months following the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan, and after mounting pressure from a vocal anti-nuclear movement inside Germany — the German government announced that it would close down its commercial nuclear program by 2022.

The following December, German officials met with the Department of Energy to discuss Germany paying to dispose of waste from a shuttered experimental reactor, according to a February 2012 letter.

The letter discusses an experimental reactor that was a "graphite-moderated pebble bed reactor" in the process of being dismantled.

The graphite-based fuel for the reactor originated in the U.S. and initially totaled about 900 kilograms of highly enriched uranium, according to the letter.

The German government has pledged \$10 million to develop technology that could process the billiard-ball-sized pebbles, which were part of two reactors first conceived in the 1950s and used until the late 1980s.

In May, the Department of Energy announced in a federal register notice that it would embark on an "environmental assessment" of the plan.

The assessment could reach a "finding of no significant impact." If the assessment concludes there is an impact, then an environmental impact statement would be formulated.

In a series of government reports from both the U.S. and Germany, the "pebble bed" reactors are described as experimental reactors that were hooked up to the power grid and provided electricity.

In German documents that list research reactors, the two reactors where the waste originated weren't mentioned, Clements said.

The first reactor was commissioned in 1967 and provided 122,000 hours of service in 21 years of operation, according to an August 2001 International Atomic Energy Agency technical meeting report.




The same report mentions a second reactor that succeeded the first that was connected to the power grid in 1985 and performed more than 16,000 hours of service.

A report from the Idaho National Lab last May said the original reactor was used "primarily as a demonstration and a testbed for pebble fuel but it also delivered power to the grid."

An October 1970 Department of Energy technical report discusses the pebble bed technology: "The feasibility of the concept has been demonstrated by the AVR experimental reactor, which has been supplying electricity to the grid since December 1967."

The report mentions that the next development stage would be the second reactor that came online in 1985.

Read or Share this story: <http://gmol.co/1IV8mjR>

		<p>The 6th Annual Run2Overcome will be on <b>SATURDAY, AUGUST 2, 2014.</b> ALL ARE WELCOME: walkers, runners, strollers, etc. COME SUPPORT THE CAUSE! - REGISTER NOW &gt;&gt;&gt;</p>	<p>BENEFITING THE <b>JULIE VALENTINE</b> center</p> 
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<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/2014/07/09/plan-ship-german-nuke-waste-sc-questioned/12434185/>

Refer a Friend <sup>x</sup>

# Aiken Standard

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## **Editorial: New German waste another bad signal**

Posted: Monday, July 7, 2014 12:01 a.m.

The possibility of more nuclear waste coming to Savannah River Site – this time from Germany – is another distressing sign that South Carolina is becoming a dumping ground for such material.

The Department of Energy, which oversees the Site, recently proposed to accept, process and dispose of used nuclear fuel from the European country, which contains approximately 900 kilograms of uranium. That equates to 1 million baseball-sized graphite spheres of highly enriched uranium coming to the Palmetto State with no end in sight for when it will leave.

The Citizens Advisory Board, which helps to provide feedback to the Department of Energy, has strongly recommended the agency not accept additional shipments of foreign nuclear material.

We urged the department to follow their recommendation. We've seen the Site already accept too many foreign shipments with little belief that they will ever be moved to a different storage facility.

This continues an ongoing broken promise to South Carolina, and Aiken County, where Yucca Mountain in Nevada was supposed to be the permanent repository for such material.

Instead, the Palmetto State has earned that designation by default.

Most nuclear waste material was intended to go to the site located near Las Vegas, but President Barack Obama scratched those plans for reasons that reek of politics.

Now, our state is continually threatened with becoming the dumping ground for waste. While it may have its economic benefits, the environmental and health risks of any kind of mishap far outweigh any financial profit.

The German uranium program began as part of the Atoms for Peace Program under former President Dwight D. Eisenhower in order to make the material available to countries that wanted it for research.

The agreement stated that the U.S. was to take the uranium back; that's why the Site is being considered as a destination.

We urge the public to send input to the department by emailing Drew Grainger, National Environmental Policy Act compliance officer, at [Drew.Grainger@srs.gov](mailto:Drew.Grainger@srs.gov).

There appears to be no path toward disposing of this material, and the more our state accepts, the clearer it becomes that we're open to becoming a permanent dumping ground.



OPINION Editorials | Letters to the Editor | Columns | Editorial Cartoons | Write A Letter

## Don't dump this on us

### ***Permanent storage of nuclear waste is an alarming turn in SRS' mission***

By Augusta Chronicle Editorial Staff

Sunday, July 6, 2014

Savannah River Site is not now, nor has it ever been, a dump for high-level nuclear waste.

But as long as the nation dithers on the mothballed Yucca Mountain repository, a dump is precisely what SRS moves a step closer to becoming under a proposal to import nearly one ton of highly-enriched uranium from Germany.

The Department of Energy's plan to ship 900 kilograms of used reactor fuel for processing and disposal at SRS, ostensibly for nuclear nonproliferation reasons, is out for public review and comment until July 21.

What the public should realize is that it doesn't matter which of the three "disposal" options the DOE pursues at SRS. The end result is the same – long-term storage at a facility that never was intended to be a high-level waste repository.

This plan essentially turns SRS, which has 713,000 people living within a 50-mile radius, into a nuclear Roach Motel. Highly radioactive material checks in, but it doesn't check out.

The end of the road for such waste was supposed to be the deep-geologic repository at Yucca Mountain, a cavern carved from igneous rock 1,000 feet below ground in a desolate section of Nevada desert on a federal reservation larger than the states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Jersey combined.

That project – funded since 1982, selected in a process established by law in 1987 and under construction since 1994 – was summarily killed in 2009 during one of the first acts of President Obama and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev.

Today, the \$15 billion facility gathers dust, as does the 2012 report by Obama's "Blue Ribbon Commission" on nuclear waste, whose suggested Yucca Mountain "alternatives" include building interim regional storage sites to hold waste for up to 100 years.

Make no mistake – when this administration says "disposal" at SRS, it means just that. Permanent storage is the only option as long as Yucca Mountain remains off the table.

Sorry, Washington, but this community never signed up for that.

Backers of the importation plan, which include the Energy Department and area chambers of commerce, say the deal simply repatriates U.S.-originated uranium sent abroad during the Eisenhower-era "Atoms for Peace" research program to share nuclear technology with the world.

Opponents say Germany – which also lacks a long-term repository – simply is trying to rid itself of high-level waste by reclassifying commercial units as "research" reactors to make the material legal for export. The SRS Citizens Advisory Board already has voiced opposition to bringing spent commercial fuel to the site.

But politics and semantics aside, transporting *any* high-level waste to SRS without an exit strategy simply is a bad deal for the community any way you slice it. Where's the upside?

The area this work would occur, H-Canyon, already is federally funded. Beyond a handful of research jobs at the Savannah River National Laboratory – which developed the technology to extract uranium from the irradiated graphite fuel balls – who else benefits? The German government? A few shipping companies?

If we're missing something here, please, let us know. To date, there has been no economic-benefit analysis. And how extensive has the environmental study been?

This page has long been a proponent of SRS' defense and environmental missions, including the proposed mixed-oxide fuel facility that the Obama administration dubiously placed in "cold standby" earlier this year. We see clear value in that project, which would remove 34 metric tons of Soviet-era, weapons-grade plutonium from Russia and convert it to a form of fuel for nuclear power plants.

But there is little value in importing what is arguably commercial waste from a wealthy political ally when the United States has no permanent waste-disposal solution of its own.

The German deal would add as many as 100 canisters of high-level vitrified waste to the 3,800 already sitting at SRS with nowhere to go, and it could open the door for disposal agreements with other nations as well.

The DOE proposal is salt in the wound President Obama inflicted five years ago when he erased three decades of scientific study, legislative toil and taxpayer expenditures, all for the express purpose of improving the political fortunes of a lone senator from Clark County, Nev.

In addition to all the high-level waste being warehoused at federal facilities nationwide, this administration's nuclear-waste policy vacuum also slams the door on America's commercial nuclear power industry, whose plants are sitting on 72,000 tons of used nuclear fuel that has no place to go.

And after all that, this administration has the gall to ask us to accept hazardous waste from a foreign nation?

Until the political winds change and Yucca Mountain is put back on track, the Augusta-Aiken metro area's response to taking on "disposal" duties outlined in the DOE-Germany deal should be a resounding "no."

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# Editorial: Don't bring more nuclear waste to SRS

GRE 5:43 p.m. EDT May 1, 2014

*State should be wary of plan for more nuclear waste to SRS after years of broken promises. Plans for reprocessing, permanent storage in Nevada all have fallen by the wayside as waste piles up.*



(Photo: Bart Boatwright, Staff)

The Savannah River Site near Aiken was not designed as a permanent or even a long-term storage site for high-level nuclear waste. Yet, because of broken promises and foot-dragging by the federal government, SRS has become just that. Now, there is word that the United States and Germany are in discussions about bringing even more nuclear waste to the site. Such a proposal should be met with extreme circumspection.

The United States Department of Energy is evaluating a plan to accept waste from a German prototype reactor, according to a recent report in *The Greenville News*. The talks began in 2011, and there is no agreement in place. However, it is troubling that there would even be discussion about bringing in more nuclear waste even as material that was supposed to be temporarily stored at SRS continues to sit with no viable plan in place to move it or process it.

The discussions are over approximately 1 ton of nuclear material that would be transported in canisters to SRS.

There already is a great deal of high-level nuclear waste at the Savannah River Site, including 37 million gallons of liquid radioactive waste that the government promised would be cleaned up by the mid-2020s. Instead, in some cases, the containers holding the waste are leaking, creating a dangerous situation. Much of the waste at SRS was brought in under the promise that it would be reprocessed and then removed from the state. That has yet to happen. Until it does, South Carolina should resist plans to bring more nuclear waste to the Savannah River Site. The arrival of the German waste is far from imminent, and it should stay that way until promises already made are being fulfilled. That day right now seems to be a long way off.

The broken promises for South Carolina have come over the course of several years.

SRS was supposed to be home to a fuel reprocessing plant that would have turned much of the waste at the site into fuel for nuclear power plants. The Obama administration now is strongly urging that the proposed reprocessing plant be put on hold. Given that there are no apparent buyers for the fuel, it is difficult to challenge the administration's decision on a practical level while at the same time it is completely reasonable to expect the administration to make good on promises to South Carolina.

It stands as a deplorable failure of the federal government to deliver on promises made when former Gov. Jim Hodges unsuccessfully fought efforts to ship plutonium to South Carolina. Work on the Mixed Oxide reprocessing plant began in 2007. Years of delays and cost overruns have contributed to the apparent demise of this facility. Initially estimated to cost \$3.8 billion, the budget has surged past \$7.5 billion and the facility remains unfinished.

The second promise that the federal government has broken was made to all the states. Nowhere was nuclear waste supposed to be stored indefinitely, except in a vast underground repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. The administration in league with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, however, has done its best to kill that facility. Meantime, nuclear waste continues to pile up at sites throughout the United States with no permanent storage plan on the table.

South Carolina welcomes the jobs that are created by the Savannah River Site. The state even is willing to bring some nuclear waste here that few other places are able to handle. However, that waste needs to come with a viable plan to render it safe or transport it to a permanent storage facility. No such plans exist, and the final disposition of any waste — including the material in question from Germany — needs to be a significant part of the Energy Department's discussions to bring it here.

The federal government has not been a trustworthy partner when it comes to shipping radioactive material to the Savannah River Site. As a spokesman for Gov. Nikki Haley told *The News*, the federal government has failed to live up to long-standing promises to this state. Until it begins to fulfill those promises, there should be strong opposition to bringing any more of this dangerous waste to a facility the government seems willing to turn into a de facto nuclear waste dump.

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**Antwort des Parlamentarischen Staatssekretärs Stefan Müller  
vom 11. April 2014**

Aus Sicht der Bundesregierung stellen die beiden Bildungsbereiche der beruflichen Bildung und der Hochschulbildung hervorragende und gleichwertige Angebote bereit, mit denen jungen Menschen ein qualifizierter und nachhaltig erfolgreicher Einstieg in die Erwerbstätigkeit ermöglicht wird. Die Stärke der deutschen Volkswirtschaft liegt in einer ausgewogenen Kombination aus Fachkräften mit beruflichen und hochschulischen Abschlüssen. Dies zeigt sich u. a. in der im europäischen Vergleich deutlich geringeren Jugendarbeitslosigkeit. Die Bundesregierung will beide Bildungssysteme weiter stärken und attraktiv für junge Menschen gestalten.

Dazu gehört auch, die Verzahnung und Durchlässigkeit der beiden Ausbildungswege zu verbessern, um Anschlüsse zu erleichtern und die spezifischen Stärken beider Bildungsbereiche optimal miteinander zu verbinden.

59. Abgeordneter  
**Kai Gehring**  
(BÜNDNIS 90/  
DIE GRÜNEN)
- Wie beurteilt die Bundesregierung die Chancen der Übertragbarkeit des deutschen dualen Studienmodells ins Ausland, und stimmt sie der Forderung des Wissenschaftsrates zu, einen entsprechenden Prozess von einer zentralen Stelle (wie etwa dem Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienst) koordinieren zu lassen?

**Antwort des Parlamentarischen Staatssekretärs Thomas Rachel  
vom 14. April 2014**

Die Bundesregierung hält duale Studiengänge grundsätzlich auch als Modell für andere Staaten für attraktiv. Die in Deutschland anzutreffende Vielfalt könnte eine entsprechend differenzierte Zusammenarbeit mit dem Ausland erleichtern. Dabei sollte allerdings das Grundprinzip einer engen Verzahnung von Unternehmen und Hochschulen gewahrt werden. Diese Voraussetzung ist in vielen Ländern noch nicht gegeben. Derzeit fördert der Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst (DAAD) aus Mitteln des Stifterverbands eine wissenschaftliche Studie zu Internationalisierung und Export dualen Studiums, um Möglichkeiten einer internationalen Zusammenarbeit in diesem Bereich auszuloten. Der „Runde Tisch zur internationalen Berufsbildungskoooperation“ beim Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, an dessen Sitzungen auf Arbeitsebene der DAAD teilnimmt, diskutiert ebenfalls Fragen der internationalen Übertragbarkeit des dualen Studiums.

60. Abgeordnete  
**Sylvia Kötting-Uhl**  
(BÜNDNIS 90/  
DIE GRÜNEN)
- Welche waren nach Kenntnis der Bundesregierung die Energieversorgungsunternehmen, denen zur Zeit der Errichtung und des Betriebs der Allgemeine Versuchsreaktor (AVR) Jülich gehörte (möglichst bitte mit Angabe der jeweiligen Anteilshöhe), und welche Strommenge

hat der AVR während seiner Betriebszeit nach Kenntnis der Bundesregierung bzw. des vom Bund getragenen Forschungszentrums Jülich insgesamt ins öffentliche Stromnetz eingespeist?

**Antwort des Parlamentarischen Staatssekretärs Stefan Müller vom 15. April 2014**

Der Allgemeine Versuchsreaktor (AVR) gehörte zur Zeit der Errichtung und des Betriebs der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Versuchsreaktor GmbH. Bei ihrer Gründung war die Arbeitsgemeinschaft Versuchsreaktor GmbH ein Zusammenschluss von 15 kommunalen Elektrizitätsversorgungsunternehmen (EVU). Die folgende Tabelle enthält die einzelnen EVUs mit der jeweiligen Anteilshöhe. Während der 21-jährigen Betriebszeit des Forschungsreaktors wurden 1,63 TWh an elektrischer Energie in das öffentliche Netz eingespeist.

Tab. 1 Altgesellschafter der AVR und deren Anteile

Gesellschafter AVR vor 2013	Stammeinlage in DM	Anteile in %
Stadtwerke Aachen AG, Aachen	150.000	2,46
Stadtwerke Bonn GmbH, Bonn	125.000	2,05
swb AG, Bremen	750.000	12,30
Stadtwerke Düsseldorf AG, Düsseldorf	1.250.000	20,49
Stadtwerke Duisburg AG, Duisburg	300.000	4,92
Oberhessische Versorgungsbetriebe AG, Friedberg	125.000	2,05
Mark-E AG, Hagen	1.000.000	16,39
Elektrizitätswerk Wesertal GmbH, Hameln	100.000	1,64
Stadtwerke Hannover AG, Hannover	500.000	8,20
Elektrizitätswerk Minden-Ravensberg GmbH, Herford	250.000	4,10
SWK ENERGIE GmbH, Krefeld	125.000	2,05
MVV Energie AG, Mannheim	250.000	4,10
Stadtwerke München GmbH, München	750.000	12,30
Stadtwerke Würzburg AG, Würzburg	50.000	0,82
Wuppertaler Stadtwerke AG, Wuppertal	375.000	6,15
Summe	<u>6.100.000</u>	100,00