



# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

SAVANNAH RIVER OPERATIONS OFFICE  
AIKEN, SC 29802

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:  
Jim Giusti, DOE, (803) 952-7697  
[james-r.giusti@srs.gov](mailto:james-r.giusti@srs.gov)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Monday, April 2, 2012

Dean Campbell, SRR, 803.208.8270  
[Dean.Campbell@srs.gov](mailto:Dean.Campbell@srs.gov)

## Grouting Begins on First SRS Waste Tanks Since 1997

AIKEN, S.C. – At about 9 AM today, Savannah River Remediation (SRR), LLC, workers began the operational closure of two hazardous waste tanks at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS), signifying the most substantial environmental risk reduction in South Carolina since 1997.

"We've worked hard with Savannah River Site and other federal partners to resolve many complex tank closure issues and reduce the risk of an environmental incident," S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control Director Catherine Templeton said. "This has paved the way for the closure of Tanks 18 and 19, and for the remaining tanks to close at a faster pace. We look forward to a continued collaboration with SRS in laying the groundwork for more cleanup activities."

With a radio command to begin, a specially formulated cement-like grout began flowing from the first concrete truck of the day into one of two designated underground waste tanks, Tanks 18 and 19, which will be operationally closed at the Site, located near Aiken, S.C. The start of grouting culminates 32 years of waste removal and cleaning operations in the 1.3 million-gallon tanks and begins a process that will result in the first SRS waste tanks being closed since the first two were closed in 1997.

Dr. David Moody, DOE Savannah River Manager, said the start of grouting creates a template for the operational closure of the Site's remaining tanks and is significant in the disposition of the Site's legacy nuclear waste.

"Eliminating the risk of radioactive legacy nuclear waste is a priority and the start of grouting of these tanks is significant to meeting our critical mission," Dr. Moody said. "SRS was the first site to close waste tanks and becomes the next site to close tanks, since waste tanks were closed at the Idaho National Laboratory in 2007."

"The quick review and approval of our waste determination documents by South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and Environmental Protection Agency Region 4 was critical to us getting the Department's approval and being able to move forward with tank closures. They work as long and as hard as the SRS team. Today, we are all successful through our collaborative efforts," added Dr. Moody

Savannah River Operations Office  
P.O. Box A  
Aiken, SC 29802

(803) 952-7697

<http://sro.srs.gov/index.html>

SRR, the liquid waste contractor at SRS, is leading the effort to operationally close the waste tanks. The grouting process will include six cement trucks an hour operating eight hours a day, five days a week, pumping the grout to fill the waste tanks.

Dave Olson, SRR President and Project Manager, indicated grouting the tanks will eliminate risk for workers and the environment.

"DOE and SRR are committed to protecting workers, the public, and the environment while achieving risk reduction in a cost effective manner, and in compliance with regulatory commitments," Olson said. "Many years and a lot of safe operations will result in Tanks 18 and 19 being operationally closed this summer."

The tanks were constructed in 1958 with Tank 18 becoming operational in 1959 as a waste receipt tank in the Site's nuclear weapons production process. Tank 19 was placed into operations in 1961 and also used as a nuclear waste receipt tank. Tank 18 remained in active service until 1986 when waste removal activities were initiated. Tank 19 remained in service until 1980 at which time waste removal began. Both tanks held approximately 1.3 million gallons of radioactive hazardous waste.

"Closing Tanks 18 and 19 is a big step forward in reducing the risk posed by legacy high level waste at SRS, and I'm very proud to be a part of the outstanding team that's responsible for this accomplishment! I also want to recognize and express DOE's appreciation for the dedication of the many outstanding representatives of the SCDHEC and EPA who worked so closely with us to surmount the complex regulatory and technical issues related to tank closure. Their timely reviews and inputs on all regulatory aspects were instrumental in our ability to close these tanks. Through our partnership with SCDHEC and our mutual focus on reducing environmental risk, we now have a regulatory road map in place to close the remaining tanks at a much more rapid pace," said Terry Spears, Assistant Manager for Waste Disposition Project.

An agreement between DOE, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control required the operational closure of Tanks 18 and 19 by December 2012. Both tanks underwent extensive waste removal that included liquid and sludge removal, specialized mechanical cleaning, and working to isolate the tanks from all systems, all leading to regulatory confirmation that the tanks were essentially cleaned and ready for grouting.

Grouting of the massive underground tanks, ancillary piping and equipment will continue until late summer before the tanks are confirmed closed.

Additional information on the Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management and the Savannah River Site can be found at <http://www.em.doe.gov> or <http://www.srs.gov>.

DOE

SR-2012-02

Connect With SRS Online:

On Twitter: <http://twitter.com/SRSNews>

On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/SavannahRiverSite>

On YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/SRSNews>

On flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/51009184@N06/>

## Note to Reporters:

*On April 10, 2012, at 10 AM, SRS will host a media tour of the Tank 18 and 19 grouting process. If you are interested in attending this, please contact Dean Campbell at 803.208.8270 or [Dean.Campbell@srs.gov](mailto:Dean.Campbell@srs.gov), by April 6, 2012*