



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 4  
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER  
61 FORSYTH STREET, SW  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

CERTIFIED MAIL  
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Ms. Helen Belencan, Director  
F-Area Closure Project  
U. S. Department of Energy  
Savannah River Operations Office  
P. O. Box A  
Aiken, SC 29802

Mr. Wade Whitaker, Director  
Soil and Groundwater Closure Project  
U. S. Department of Energy  
Savannah River Operations Office  
P. O. Box A  
Aiken, SC 29802

SUBJ: Off-Site Acceptability of CERCLA Waste at the E-Area Slit Trenches, United States  
Department of Energy Savannah River Site, Aiken, South Carolina

Dear Ms. Belencan and Mr. Whitaker:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is reviewing the current acceptability status of the E-Area slit trenches to receive CERCLA wastes. The CERCLA wastes to which this refers are defined as those wastes generated as a result of activities authorized pursuant to, or funded by, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). The receipt of these CERCLA wastes by units is regulated by the Off-Site Rule (OSR) found at 40 C.F.R. § 300.440 (also see 58 FR 49200 (September 22, 1993)).

Recent information received by the EPA indicates that tritium has been released from one or more of the trenches into the vadose zone beneath the trenches. This development appears to meet the definition of the term "release" under CERCLA Section 101(22) and 40 C.F.R. § 300.5, creating the need for the EPA to reevaluate the affirmative determination of acceptability for disposal of CERCLA waste granted on August 8, 1996 pursuant to 40 CFR § 300.440(c). In addition, the EPA is aware that the United States Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS) will be generating large amounts of CERCLA waste from the Deactivation and Decommissioning Program in the near future, and that the slit trenches may be used to dispose of the waste.

The EPA, DOE and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) have recently been examining the possible use and appropriate regulatory framework of the E-Area slit trenches. However, the recent information provided by the DOE indicates that E-Area may not be suitable to receive CERCLA waste at the current time. The EPA requests that the DOE schedule a meeting, within 30 days of receipt of this letter, at our Regional office

in Atlanta, to discuss these issues in concert with the SCDHEC and determine an appropriate path forward.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please feel free to call Ken Feely, of my staff at (404)562-8512 or Robert Pope, of my staff at (404) 562-8506.

Sincerely,

Arthur L. Collins, Acting Chief  
Federal Facilities Branch  
Superfund Division

cc: Mr. Donald L. Siron, SCDHEC  
Mr. Keith Lindler, SCDHEC  
Mr. Brian Hennessey, DOE-SR  
Mr. Howard Pope, DOE-SR  
Mr. A. Ben Gould, DOE-SR  
Ms. M. A. Flora, WSRC-SGCP (signed original, certified mail)