

News from the Savannah River Site

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For Immediate Release

Partial Agreement Reached On Savannah River Site Tank Closure Milestone Dispute

AIKEN, S.C. February 12, 2015 - Today, the Department of Energy (DOE), Environmental Protection Agency - Region 4 (EPA-4), and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) announced a partial agreement on a tank closure milestone at the Savannah River Site (SRS).

The parties agreed to extend the operational closure of Tank 16 to October 27, 2015, (a 27-day extension) and extend the Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) by 30 days, until March 12, 2015, for additional discussion on the operational closure of Tank 12. Both tanks are located in the H Tank Farm.

“This agreement shows that our dispute resolution process under the Federal Facilities Agreement (FFA) works through collaborative discussions,” said Jim Folk, Acting Assistant Manager of Waste Disposition. “Our discussions have been very productive; both in the informal and formal process, but with Tank 12 more time is necessary to address a resolution.”

“EPA believes that all parties are negotiating in good faith during the Dispute Resolution. The ability of DOE to reduce document revision times combined with EPA and SCDHEC agreement to reduce review times for the Tank 16 closure demonstrates that all 3 parties are willing to do what it takes to be successful in Tank Closure. The Federal Facilities Agreement (FFA) is designed to allow the 3 parties to work through issues and come to resolution. All parties recognize that there are budgetary constraints. It is the willingness of SRS, SCDHEC and EPA to work collaboratively to address problems that makes the difference,” said Franklin Hill, EPA Region 4 Superfund Division Director.

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“SCDHEC is pleased that the closure request for Tank 16 has been pulled back over a year from December 31, 2016 to October 27, 2015. SCDHEC continues to seek a fix to the overall liquid waste problems caused by lack of budget and treatment delay. SCDHEC eagerly anticipates DOE's offer of a permanent solution to avoid the need for further extensions,” said Daphne Neel, SCDHEC Chief, Bureau of Land and Waste Management

This dispute arose from DOE's August 2014 request for extension (under FFA Section IX.E.5 and Section XXXI) of the operational closure date for 4 tanks with the schedule date of September 30, 2015. After EPA-4 and SCDHEC non-concurred with the requested duration of the extension in August 2014, DOE invoked informal dispute resolution in September 2014. After two informal dispute resolution discussions in October and November 2014, the dispute was elevated to the Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) at the request of SCDHEC on January 13, 2015, in accordance with FFA Section XXVII, “Resolution of Disputes.”

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