



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

FEB 13 1998

Ms. Melinda Vickers
Industrial Agricultural Permitting Division
South Carolina Department of Health and
Environmental Control
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Ms. Vickers:

SUBJECT: Savannah River Site (SRS) High Level Radioactive Waste Storage Tank Closures

As SRS completes closing the second High Level Waste (HLW) tank, I wanted to take this opportunity to again express appreciation and respect for the role you and your staff played in supporting achievement of these significant milestones. I also wanted to address a point of clarification with respect to "incidental waste".

Initially, it was believed that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) classification, review, approval, or authorization of "incidental waste" was required. In fact, this was the case when approval was provided by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) for the *Industrial Wastewater Closure Plan for F and H Area High Level Waste Tank Systems*; *Industrial Wastewater Closure Module for the High Level Waste Tank 20 System*; and *Industrial Wastewater Closure Module for the High Level Waste Tank 17 System*. Consequently, the SCDHEC approval letters for the above documents required NRC "classification" or "authorization" of "incidental waste" prior to commencement of tank closure activities.

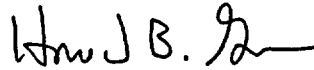
Subsequent discussions between the Savannah River Operations Office and the NRC regarding the determination that the small fraction of residual waste remaining in the HLW tanks after waste removal is "incidental waste" and not HLW; it was agreed that it is incumbent upon the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to determine whether the "incidental waste" criteria of the Bernero (NRC) to Lytle (DOE) letter of March 1993 could be satisfied with respect to the HLW tanks at SRS. Therefore, specific authorization, approval, or classification of SRS "incidental waste" by the NRC would not be required or provided. This point was not clearly defined until late in the planning process. Your staff was subsequently informed and accepted the fact that specific documentation from the NRC would not be forthcoming and closure of Tanks 20 and 17 proceeded as planned. Even though all parties involved recognize that NRC documentation is no longer an issue, I feel that we would be remiss if we did not address and document this discrepancy with respect to the HLW tank closure process.

Ms. Melinda Vickers

2

FEB 13 1998

Should you have any questions, please contact me or Larry Ling of my staff at (803) 208-8248.



Howard B. Gnann, Director
Programs Division

PD:LTL:eeh

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cc:

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