



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

JUL 25 2008

Mr. Scott Flanders, Deputy Director
Division of Waste Management
and Environmental Protection
Office of Federal and State Materials
and Environmental Management Programs

Dear Mr. Flanders:

SUBJECT: Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Onsite Observation Report for the Savannah River Site Saltstone Production and Disposal Facilities (SPF) (Your letter, 6/5/08)

I would like to acknowledge receipt of the NRC observation report dated June 5, 2008, regarding the second onsite visit conducted at the Saltstone Production Facility (SPF) by your staff during March 24 – 28, 2008. The Department of Energy (DOE) is evaluating the issues described in this report in order to assure that the waste determination assumptions and analysis are accurate.

As the monitoring of SPF operations by NRC progresses and evolves, the DOE will provide as necessary the documentation that demonstrates compliance with performance objectives. The NRC's observations are beneficial and highly regarded. We fully expect to reach mutual agreement in order to close issues.

To accommodate scheduling of future observation visits and to maximize the benefits, we appreciate receiving an advance copy of the agenda for each impending visit. This will allow us to streamline coordination of your visits so that you may observe those items of interest. DOE recognizes that the focus of the future visits will be to assess other performance objectives (e.g. protection of individuals against inadvertent intrusion) and to review the status of open items identified during prior visits. For your information, laboratory testing for technetium oxidation, reducing capacity for Saltstone waste form, Kd of Saltstone waste form, and physical properties of Saltstone waste form and vault is expected to be completed by mid-August and analysis reports are expected by September 30. Additionally, an engineering evaluation pertaining to Actinide Removal Process and Modular Caustic Side Solvent Extraction Unit (ARP/MCU) operations is expected by July 31. I am aware that your staff wanted to observe these activities and information.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions regarding activities at the SPF at (803) 208-6076.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lawrence T. Ling".

Lawrence T. Ling, Director
Waste Disposition Programs Division

WDPD-08-065