



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

July 10, 2020

Mr. James L. Folk, Jr., Assistant Manager Waste Disposition
Department of Energy Savannah River Operations Office
P.O. Box A
Aiken, South Carolina 29802

SUBJECT: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S
SUBMITTAL OF THE 2020 SAVANNAH RIVER SITE SALTSTONE
DISPOSAL FACILITY PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT, FOR
TECHNICAL REVIEW AND CLOSURE OF THE APRIL 30, 2012,
TYPE-IV LETTER OF CONCERN

Dear Mr. Folk:

This letter acknowledges the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) receipt of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) 2020 Savannah River Site Saltstone Disposal Facility (SDF) Performance Assessment (PA). In its transmittal letter dated July 6, 2020, (NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System [ADAMS] Accession No. ML20189A591) the DOE requested that the NRC conduct a technical review of the 2020 SDF PA, Revision 0 under Section 3116(b) of the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005.

The NRC has initiated an Acceptance Review for the 2020 SDF PA. The NRC expects to complete the Acceptance Review by October 5, 2020. Upon completion of the Acceptance Review, the NRC will send a letter to the DOE describing the results of the Acceptance Review. The letter will also contain a schedule for the complete NRC technical review.

The 2020 SDF PA replaces the 2009 SDF PA that led to the NRC issuance of the April 12, 2012, Type-IV Letter of Concern (ADAMS Accession No. ML120650576) for the SDF. Since the NRC issued the previous SDF Technical Evaluation Report in 2012, the DOE has: (1) significantly changed the design of the saltstone disposal structures; (2) significantly changed the design of the proposed SDF closure cap; (3) substantially revised the SDF groundwater model; and (4) conducted significant new research regarding the physical and chemical properties of the saltstone wastefrom.

The 2020 SDF PA and those DOE informational and design changes since the 2009 SDF PA represent a significant departure from the natural and engineered system that formed the basis for the NRC 2012 Type-IV Letter of Concern. Therefore, the NRC is administratively closing the 2012 Type-IV Letter of Concern. The fundamental areas that led to the Type-IV Letter of Concern will be reviewed within the entire scope of the 2020 SDF PA and supporting documents. The NRC will make conclusions on whether the NRC has reasonable assurance that the performance objectives of Title 10, *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 61 will be met.

J. Folk

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In accordance with 10 CFR Section 2.390, "Agency Rules of Practice and Procedure," a copy of this letter will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records component of ADAMS. The ADAMS database is accessible from the NRC Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/readingrm/adams.html>

If you have any questions or need additional information, then please contact Mr. Harry Felsher of my staff at Harry.Felsher@nrc.gov or at 301-415-6559.

Sincerely,

Patricia K. Holahan, Director
Division of Decommissioning, Uranium
Recovery, and Waste Programs
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Docket No. PROJ0734

cc: WIR ListServ

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DATED July 10, 2020

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ADAMS Accession Number: ML20148M201 *via email

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