

Statement of Dennis Hayes

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Before the

Committee on Armed Services  
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide this statement in support of today's hearing.

I am here representing the Washington Savannah River Company, which has served as the operating contractor at the Savannah River Site since 1989. Our company is pleased to have helped play a role in NNSA's national security mission, and grateful for all of the stakeholder support that has allowed the missions at SRS to succeed.

Today, the Savannah River Site is home to a complex of facilities that are designed and operated to process tritium, the radioactive form of hydrogen gas that is an essential component of a nuclear weapon. Our operations include reclamation of previously used tritium reservoirs; receipt, packaging and shipping of reservoirs; recycling, extraction and enrichment of tritium gas; and laboratory operations.

We are fully supportive of the Complex Transformation vision, as outlined by Mr. D'Agostino. At Savannah River, we are already adjusting to the changing workload associated with today's stockpile requirements; we also have been full participants in the process to date, helping to develop alternatives in the areas of tritium, plutonium and uranium.

The Savannah River Site tritium facilities have already gone through a transformation since the mid-1990s, and can be seen as one of the models for what can be achieved through transformation. From 1994 through 2007, SRS successfully executed three major line item projects – the Replacement Tritium Facility (1994), the Tritium Consolidation Project (2004) and the Tritium Extraction Facility (2007) – that now make up the core operation.

Through that transformation, which replaced all of the original SRS tritium gas processing capability, we have achieved the following:

- Implementation of state of the art technology.

-Substantial improvements in worker safety and reductions in environmental emissions.

-An overall enhancement to basic capabilities to support the complex and the stockpile, both today and for the foreseeable future.

In that same timeframe, we successfully executed the transfer of the Gas Transfer System Surveillance mission. The Savannah River Site's acceptance of that mission enabled DOE to cease operations at the Mound Site in Ohio, and helped enable the transfer of that site to the local community for reuse efforts.

All of the above efforts support the transformation goal of eliminating redundant capability where it makes sense and when the risks are acceptable.

As suggested in Mr. D'Agostino's testimony, the Savannah River tritium facilities would play a role in transformation as the preferred alternative for the tritium production center of excellence. That designation acknowledges the investment that has been made in the set of facilities described above; it also would allow for the consolidation of tritium research and development work at Savannah River, and the corresponding elimination of redundant capability and facility footprint. From the standpoint of our current operations, we are also implementing change that supports transformation goals. Our Tritium Extraction Facility personnel, for example, are working under a Responsive Operations plan, a plan that acknowledges and adapts to a changing workload, while making the best, most efficient use of a trained, mobile workforce. I would be happy to provide you with additional specific detail if you wish.

In summary, and on behalf of the Savannah River Site, we look forward to a continuing role in the transformed NNSA complex.