

Final

MEETING MEMORANDUM

To: Secretary Samuel W. Bodman

From: Jill Sigal, Acting Assistant Secretary
Office: Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs

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From: Charlie Anderson, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

Office: Environmental Management

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Location: Secretary's Office

Date: May 20, 2005

Time: 3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Requested by: Jill Sigal and Charlie Anderson

Background: In the current budget climate the Office of Science (SC) had to make tough choices for the FY 2006 budget. As a result, SC concluded that the work being performed at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory (SREL) did not rise high enough on its priority list to justify continued funding. SC took over the bulk of the funding for the SREL in FY 2003 from the Office of Environmental Management (EM).

On April 22, 2005 you sent a letter to the Senators from South Carolina and Georgia stating that although SREL performs quality scientific research, the Office of Science could not justify SREL funding in a tight budget.

However, EM believes that SREL could perform work that will enhance the mission of the Savannah River Site (SRS). We have identified an alternative that could keep the SREL operational through FY 2007, though at a lower funding level than in previous years.

We propose the following alternative funding plan: EM would contribute \$3 million to SREL from the SRS budget for FY 2006. In addition, the Office of Science would provide \$1 million in FY 2006 and the National Nuclear Security Administration would provide approximately \$500,000 in FY 2006.

Of the \$3 million that EM would contribute, between \$1 and \$2 million would support infrastructure and maintenance. The remaining amount would support work tasked by EM, SC, and NNSA. It is important to note that under the current scenario the Department would need to spend between \$1 - \$2 million in FY 2006, to close the SREL.

~~In FY 2007, EM would fund SREL \$1 million to continue operations in support of SRS. The extension would allow SREL time to seek funding for work in FY 2007 from DOE programs and non-DOE entities while completing its current work for the Department and continuing its independently funded research. It would also establish the mechanisms for possible SREL continuation beyond FY 2007.~~

EM, with federal resources, would also support the preparation and management of a new cooperative agreement needed for SREL to operate. The cooperative agreement is the contract like mechanism that allows SREL to enter into agreements with other universities and institutions, and to use the facilities at SRS. Supporting this agreement would only involve existing federal employees at SRS to administer the cooperative agreement; therefore there would be no measurable additional costs. ~~The new cooperative agreement would start at the conclusion of the existing agreement, which expires on June 30, 2006, and would last 5 years.~~

We ask that you approve going forward if three conditions are met:

- 1) The University of Georgia (lab operator) must agree to the reduced level of funding and agree to not seek congressional earmarks in FY 2006 and FY 2007 beyond.

- 2) The members from the South Carolina and Georgia Congressional Delegations would need to give their assurance that they would seek to have the language struck from the House Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill (HEWD) that adds \$5 million to the SC budget for SREL through the expiration of the current contract on June 30, 2006.
- 3) The Congressional delegation would need to assure the Department that they would not seek Congressional earmarks in FY 2006 and FY 2007 for SREL

Agenda: To present the Secretary with a plan to secure funding for SREL through FY 2007.

Lead & Attending Staff: Jill Sigal and Charlie Anderson

Briefing Material: None Attached

Open to Press: Yes No
