



# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Savannah River Site Accelerates TRU Waste Shipment under Recovery Act**

Aiken, SC -- The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS) began a new phase of waste disposition today, initiating the first shipment of Remote Handled (RH) Transuranic (TRU) waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in Carlsbad, New Mexico. These shipments compliment the contact handled TRU waste shipments that have been occurring at SRS for almost a decade.

TRU waste, a result of decades of defense-related research and development activities, is a special class of radioactive material consisting of clothing, tools, rags, debris, and other such items contaminated with radioactive elements, with an atomic number greater than uranium. TRU waste is primarily contaminated with plutonium, and may also be mixed with hazardous chemicals.

RH TRU waste requires special handling, shipping, and disposal methods due to the waste's radiation rates. To prepare for these RH TRU shipments, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) brought in specialized personnel to support shipping cask loading and other shipment preparations. This shipment includes six drums, or 1.26 cubic meters of RH TRU waste.

SRS made its first shipment of TRU waste to WIPP on May 8, 2001. SRS has dispositioned 29,499 55-gallon drums of legacy TRU waste identified in storage at the Site. More than half of the nearly 12,000 cubic meters of legacy volume has been disposed out of South Carolina.

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<http://sro.srs.gov/index.html>

SRS TRU WASTE  
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SRNS is continuing to repackage, characterize, and ship the remaining legacy SRS TRU wastes to WIPP. Under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, the workforce at SRS will grow significantly and shipments of RH TRU waste will nearly double over the course of the 30-month project. About 4,500 m<sup>3</sup> of TRU waste will be shipped or prepared for shipment as part of the Recovery Act project.

For additional information on the DOE's Office of Environmental Management and the Savannah River Site, visit <http://www.em.doe.gov> or <http://www.srs.gov>. Recovery Act information for SRS can be found at <http://www.srs.gov/recovery>.

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