

# ***NNSA NEWS***

*National Nuclear Security Administration*

*U.S. Department of Energy*

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## **Construction To Begin on Waste Solidification Building to Support Plutonium Disposition Mission**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) this week approved the start of construction of a Waste Solidification Building (WSB) at the Savannah River Site near Aiken, South Carolina. The WSB is one of three critical facilities that will allow the United States to dispose of surplus weapons-usable plutonium.

"Beginning construction of the Waste Solidification Building is another clear indication that we are moving forward with our plans to dispose of at least 34 metric tons of surplus U.S. weapons plutonium," said NNSA Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation William Tobey.

The WSB will process liquid waste from the Mixed Oxide (MOX) Fuel Fabrication Facility, currently under construction, and the planned Pit Disassembly and Conversion Facility (PDCF). After material is processed at the Waste Solidification Building, transuranic waste will be packaged and sent to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico, and low-level waste will be packaged and sent to on-site or commercial off-site low-level waste disposal facilities.

The Waste Solidification Building will occupy about nine acres adjacent to the MOX Facility site and the planned site of the PDCF. The WSB will contain waste concentration and cementation equipment for processing both low-activity and high-activity liquid waste, an analytical laboratory, control room, and additional support facilities. The structure is designed to provide radiation shielding for workers, confinement of airborne contamination, and protection against the potential impacts of natural phenomena hazard events. The total project cost to design, construct, and start-up the WSB is \$345 million and the facility is expected to begin operations in 2012.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military

application of nuclear science in the nation's national security enterprise. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; reduces the global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad. Visit [www.nnsa.energy.gov](http://www.nnsa.energy.gov) for more information.