



Savannah River Site Watch

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For Immediate Release

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New Aerial Photos of Partially Constructed Plutonium Fuel (MOX) Plant at DOE's Savannah River Site Released as Rumors of Layoffs Emerge; Photos Reveal Little Work Progress on Exterior of MOX Plant as the Bungled Project Teeters on the Edge of Termination

Columbia, SC – Newly obtained aerial photographs of the plutonium fuel (MOX) plant at the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River Site reveal little external progress on the partially constructed facility. The photos are being released as project termination looms and amidst rumors of layoffs of workers at the troubled project.

The photos, provided to Savannah River Site Watch by an anonymous pilot and authorized for public release, were legally taken on September 18 in full compliance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations. The [photos are linked here](#).

The photos show little change on the exterior of the MOX plant from earlier photos but reveal a few things of note: 1) Temporary Construction Openings (TCOs*) into the building are not being closed; 2) the top of the Gabion security wall on the exterior of the main building has been completed on portions of the north and south sides of the facility, and 3) the foundation of the diesel generator building on the southeast corner of the facility remains finished and without walls. (*Rain and birds have been allowed into the facility via the TCOs.)

The photos were taken by High Flyer, an anonymous pilot who for years has provided photos of the MOX project to SRS Watch. Earlier MOX plant photos by High Flyer have been used by the New York Times, Associated Press (used by many newspapers), Arms Control Today magazine and many other media outlets. The photos can be used with credit to High Flyer (e.g. Courtesy of High Flyer © 2017), as described in the "Read Me First" message from High Flyer to those who want to use or publicize the photos:

Aerial photos ©2017 SCHighFlyer@gmail.com

*Anyone wishing to use these photo for any purposes should first get permission
From the author (schighflyer@gmail.com).*

In addition, photos must include proper acknowledgement to the author (e.g. Photo Courtesy of High Flyer ©2017) in a prominent position near the Photo insertion.

Thanks!

FYI, High Flyer is the “nom du plume” of a prominent SC resident who wishes To remain anonymous to avoid some of the political fallout that inevitably follows the subjects of his photos.

The photos are being released as reports of worker layoffs in the new fiscal year, which started on October 1, have emerged. Layoffs of hundreds of workers are being reported amongst various trade crafts, including sheet metal and HAVC workers, carpenters, painters and electricians. It is unknown if the layoffs are a cost-cutting measure or designed to finally show better management by CB&I AREVA MOX Services or are a precursor to project termination. Likewise, it is suspected that the DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration, after 10 years of bungling oversight of the project, may be finally demanding of MOX Services full compliance with construction standards, which MOX Services may not be able to meet due to shoddy work in the past and a high rate of “reinstallation” (or “rework”) of improperly installed components (such as HVAC ducts).

The U.S. Department of Energy and White House support termination of the troubled project, which is proceeding under a Continuing Resolution until December 8 at the Fiscal Year 2017 funding level of \$340 million per year. The Senate Appropriations Committee, for the first time, supports termination of the project and has approved a termination level of funding - \$270 million for Fiscal Year 2018.

Other photos also being released by SRS Watch on September 18 show the Defense Waste Processing facility (DWPF) and the aging H- Canyon reprocessing plant in two photos (photo numbers 0850 and 0854) and the shuttered F-Canyon reprocessing plant with the MOX plant in the background (0820).

Observations and comments on the photos and the status of the MOX project are welcome: srswatch@gmail.com

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Notes:

Photos from September 18, 2017, ©High Flyer:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0BwkyYyn8X-ySMF9PY1V2QkJOOUE>

For comparison, photos from May 26, 2017, ©High Flyer, with “[Read Me First](#)” message:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0BwkyYyn8X-ySaGZjbUduT3Axb00>

High Flyer's photos of SCE&G's nuclear reactor construction debacle were publicized in this September 27, 2017 news release by Friends of the Earth:

[\\$9 Billion Nuclear Scrapyard: New Aerial Photos of SCE&G's Abandoned V.C. Summer Nuclear Project Reveal Disarray](#)