



Savannah River Site Watch

Savannah River Site Watch ([SRS Watch](#))

Media Advisory

For Immediate Release

November 9, 2015

New Aerial Photos of Plutonium Fuel (MOX) Plant Construction Site Released by Savannah River Site Watch, On Heels of DOE Admission that MOX Plant Construction Faces a 25% “Reinstallation” Rate

SRS Watch Challenges DOE/NNSA/CB&I AREVA MOX Services to Release Photos and Videos Showing Inside of MOX Plant and Document “Reinstallation” Construction Problems

Photos [Linked Here](#) Can be Used with Credit “©High Flyer, Special to SRS Watch”

Columbia, South Carolina – New aerial photos of the plutonium fuel (MOX) construction site at the US Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site (SRS) have been released by the public interest organization Savannah River Site Watch (SRS Watch).

The photos, taken on October 14, 2015, have been released in order to help inform the public and decision-makers about the status of the MOX project, according to SRS Watch. The photos were taken at above the legal altitude of 2000 feet by an anonymous pilot who goes by “High Flyer.”

Six new MOX plant aerial photos are linked here: <http://tinyurl.com/pru6za5>. The photos can be used with the following credit: “©High Flyer, Special to SRS Watch.” Linked below, for comparison, are MOX plant aerial photos from April 21 and July 2015, also by High Flyer.

“SRS Watch is pleased to be able to provide the MOX plant photos for public use in order to increase familiarity with the mismanaged MOX project and what our wasted tax money is being spent on,” said Tom Clements, director of SRS Watch. “The MOX plant photos provide visuals which can stimulate discussion about how the project can be smoothly shut down and if there might be alternative uses of the partially constructed MOX plant.”

Addressing construction problems with the MOX project, Clements went on to state: “Given that DOE has admitted that there is a 25% “reinstallation” rate of items installed in the MOX plant, we challenge DOE, NNSA and CB&I AREVA MOX Services to release photos and videos taken inside the MOX plant of the “installations” being removed and reinstalled. The public has been given no explanation of the admitted reinstallation problem nor have photos have been released documenting the problems, so it appears that details about MOX plant construction problems are being hidden from the public.”

In the just-released photos, almost no activity can be seen on the outside of the \$12-billion MOX facility, now 35 % to 41% complete, according to recent DOE testimony to Congress. But the photos do reveal a few changes on the outside, including the somewhat expanded excavation in the southeast (“front”) for

what are believed to be installation of plutonium waste discharge lines. Since first seen in photos taken on July 30, work on these lines have proceeded very slowly. Also, the photos reveal that the outside “gabion” security wall is still not complete and that many openings into the plant exist and have not been sealed.

In the past month, SRS Watch has received rumors about a host of construction and inspection problems at the site and believes that investigations into possible waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement by DOE, NNSA and CB&I AREVA MOX Services are needed now more than ever. “The MOX contractor and DOE officials must be held accountable for allowing this project to go so far off course. We continue to encourage MOX workers to send complaints and information on construction problems and questionable inspection activities to the [DOE inspector general hotline](#), the [GAO fraud hotline](#), the [NRC inspector general hotline](#) and to [SRS Watch](#),” said Clements.

“Once the anticipated shutdown of the project begins, we expect to see cranes and equipment removed, openings into the building sealed and other mothballing activities to protect the building from the elements. SRS Watch will continue to provide MOX plant photos that will help the public see the progress in shut-down activities,” said Clements.

“For officials with investigative bodies, we will consider taking aerials shots of the MOX plant from a specific angle or of other MOX-related facilities at SRS or lay-down yards associated with the MOX project; send your photo requests to srswatch@gmail.org,” said Clements.

In taking the photos, High Flyer complies with “voluntary minimum altitude” that is requested by the Federal Aviation Administration over DOE sites: “In addition to complying with all applicable FAA prohibitions or restrictions, aircraft are requested to maintain a minimum altitude of 2,000 feet above the terrain of a designated site. Applicable FAA prohibitions or restrictions take precedence over this voluntary minimum altitude.” (FAA Federal Regulation linked in “notes” below)

The problem-plagued MOX project is under the DOE’s National Nuclear Security Administration though it is unclear if the NNSA is continuing to monitor construction of the MOX plant. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has but one resident on-site inspector and is inspecting a small percentage of safety related items. As DOE and NNSA have been mum about what’s going on at the MOX construction site, it is unknown if DOE or NNSA are inspecting items that the NRC is not inspecting. SRS Watch solicits information if DOE/NNSA are in any way inspecting the MOX plant construction or not or if the site has essentially been abandoned to CB&I ARECA MOX Services, as has been rumored.

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Notes:

MOX Plant Aerial photos, October 14, 2015 “©High Flyer, Special to SRS Watch”:

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0BwkyYyn8X-ySQ0VqQkZFWGdvMUk&usp=sharing>

<http://tinyurl.com/pru6za5>

MOX Plant Aerial Photos July 30, 2015 “©High Flyer, Special to SRS Watch”:

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0BwkyYyn8X-ySfkJYdzRqZEo1bnJrcnNCNUdHQi1CQXJBbl90cW94OFpKeS1vdE1IWnBDVjA&usp=sharing>

<http://tinyurl.com/qd4t9v9>

MOX Plant Aerial Photos April 21, 2015 “©High Flyer, Special to SRS Watch” – no excavation visible in front of MOX plant for waste lines:

https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0BwkyYyn8X-ySfmE5OW05LWt4Z0tFTHdjQ2NyTFh1RkV1YkxEMENnNnZnd0IBU1hMRWVfy1E&usp=sharing_eid

<http://tinyurl.com/oorbrlj>

“Title 10, Part 862, RESTRICTIONS ON AIRCRAFT LANDING AND AIR DELIVERY AT DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY NUCLEAR SITES, §862.6 Voluntary minimum altitude.”

“In addition to complying with all applicable FAA prohibitions or restrictions, aircraft are requested to maintain a minimum altitude of 2,000 feet above the terrain of a designated site. Applicable FAA prohibitions or restrictions take precedence over this voluntary minimum altitude.”

<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=87950df5c8f328e979c5beb4e37aa33d&ty=HTML&h=L&mc=true&n=pt10.4.862&r=PART>

“[Plutonium Disposition and the MOX Project](#),” House Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, hearing, October 7, 2015; Mr. John J. MacWilliams Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Energy, U.S. Department of Energy, testified, in response to questions by Rep. Jim Cooper (Ranking Member, Tennessee) that there was a 25% “reinstallation” rate on things installed in the MOX plant that the \$345 million/year budget for MOX was accomplishing “nothing.” Others say that the reinstallation or “re-work” rate is 50% or higher. MacWilliams also testified that the MOX plant is 35% to 41% complete, contrary to the unsubstantiated claim by CB&I AREVA MOX Services that the MOX plant is 70% complete. Webcast archived.

Contact:

Tom Clements
SRS Watch

<http://www.srswatch.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/SavannahRiverSiteWatch>

tel. 803-834-3084

srswatch@gmail.com

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