



Savannah River Site Watch

**Savannah River Site Watch  
For Immediate Release  
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**DOE Informs Nevada Court of Weapon-Grade Plutonium Shipment from DOE's Savannah River Site to Nevada has taken Place; Unknown when Unjustified Shipment Occurred**

[Court Filing Linked Here](#)

Columbia, South Carolina – The U.S. Department of Energy has secretly shipped a large amount of weapon-grade plutonium from the Savannah River Site in South Carolina to Nevada.

The unnecessary, risky shipment of the plutonium involved its transfer from the K-Reactor storage facility at the Savannah River Site to “staging” at the Device Assembly Facility (DAF) at the Nevada Nuclear Security Site. Almost 13 metric tons of surplus weapons plutonium had been stored in the K-Reactor prior to the shipment.

It is unknown when the unjustified shipment of ½ metric ton (500 kilograms or 1100 pounds) took place but DOE on January 30, 2019 informed the federal district court in Nevada that the shipment had concluded prior to November 2018. Due to security reasons, no public notice was given before the shipment took place. And, the highway route taken by the secure DOE transport vehicles is unknown.

In a “Notice of New Information” filed with the United States District Court for the District of Nevada, DOE stated:

“Because sufficient time has now elapsed after conclusion of this campaign, DOE may now publicly state that it has completed all shipment of plutonium (approximately ½ metric ton) to Nevada pursuant to its efforts to comply with the South Carolina U.S. District Court order. Although the precise date that this occurred cannot be revealed for reasons of operational security, it can be stated that this was done before November 2018, prior to the initiation of the litigation.”

“The shipment of this large amount of plutonium on our nation’s highways has no justification beyond pleasing the federal court in South Carolina and due to the environmental and security risks it posed it should have never taken place,” according to Tom Clements, director of Savannah River Site Watch. “We hope that this shipment concludes the campaign to transfer plutonium from SRS to Nevada and

that the remaining plutonium at SRS remains in secure storage until a disposition path is clear,” he added.

DOE’s National Nuclear Security Administration has claimed that it has reclassified the plutonium in question as having a national defense need and that it could at some unknown point be fabricated into plutonium “pits” for nuclear weapons.

“DOE has a huge amount of surplus plutonium, making the reclassification of this material unnecessary, and no justification has been presented of need for new pit fabrication capacity for nuclear weapons,” according to Clements of SRS Watch.

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**Notes:**

**Court filing of January 30, 2019 linked here:**

[http://www.srswatch.org/uploads/2/7/5/8/27584045/nnsa\\_filing\\_plutonium\\_shipment\\_done\\_jan\\_30\\_2019.pdf](http://www.srswatch.org/uploads/2/7/5/8/27584045/nnsa_filing_plutonium_shipment_done_jan_30_2019.pdf)

**SRS Watch news release on the shipment issue, January 7, 2019**, with much useful informative in the “notes” section “Federal Court Hearing on State of Nevada’s “Preliminary Injunction” Request to Stop Unjustified Shipment of 1 Metric Ton of Plutonium from SRS to Nevada Set for January 17, 2019 in Reno, NV”:

[http://www.srswatch.org/uploads/2/7/5/8/27584045/savannah\\_river\\_site\\_watch\\_news\\_on\\_plutonium\\_shipment\\_court\\_hearings\\_jan\\_7\\_2019.pdf](http://www.srswatch.org/uploads/2/7/5/8/27584045/savannah_river_site_watch_news_on_plutonium_shipment_court_hearings_jan_7_2019.pdf)

**SRS Watch factsheet on challenges to plutonium “pit” production – for nuclear weapons - at SRS, released January 29, 2019:** "Obstacles and Concerns Related to “Repurposing” of the Abandoned Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility (MFFF) at DOE’s Savannah River Site (SRS) to Production of Plutonium Pits for Nuclear Weapons”:

[http://www.srswatch.org/uploads/2/7/5/8/27584045/srs\\_watch\\_challenges\\_to\\_pit\\_production\\_at\\_srs\\_jan\\_2019.pdf](http://www.srswatch.org/uploads/2/7/5/8/27584045/srs_watch_challenges_to_pit_production_at_srs_jan_2019.pdf)