



Savannah River Site Watch

### **Statement of Tom Clements, Savannah River Site Watch on Arrival of Ships Carrying Plutonium from Japan, June 6, 2016, Columbia, South Carolina**

SRS Watch can confirm that the British-flagged Pacific Egret and Pacific Heron, carrying 331 kilograms of weapon-usable plutonium have arrived in Charleston, South Carolina. About 236 kg of the material, used for nuclear reactor testing in Japan, originated in the UK. 93 kgs are of US origin and 3 kgs of French origin.

The ships departed from Tokai-Mura, Japan on March 22, 2016, after the plutonium loading was monitored on the Egret. The ships were expected to arrive in Charleston on May 15, but the arrival seems to have been delayed due to security reasons.

The ships likely arrived in Charleston in the early morning hours of Saturday, June 4 and departed the port on the early morning of Monday, June 6. They are now bound for their home port in Barrow-in-Furness, England.

The plutonium was likely off loaded during the day on Saturday and then immediately transported by truck to the US DOE's Savannah River Site.

The U.S. DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) conducted the shipment and stated in an environmental assessment released last fall that the plutonium was not suitable for plutonium fuel (MOX). NNSA stated that it intend to import up to 900 kgs of plutonium from other countries. Despite unclear nuclear non-proliferation justification, all of that plutonium is likely to go to SRS. (See Dec. 28, 2015 "[ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR GAP MATERIAL PLUTONIUM – TRANSPORT, RECEIPT, AND PROCESSING.](#)")

At SRS, the Office of Environmental Management will be in charge of the disposition of the material and Japan will pay for part of that effort (according to the DOE's Fiscal Year 2017 budget request). There is no funding and no clear plan for its disposition so it will remain at SRS for a lengthy period of time, a fact that should alarm the public concerned about SRS becoming an international plutonium storage site.

SRS Watch believes that DOE must now present a clear schedule for managing the plutonium and removing it from SRS for disposal.

For nuclear non-proliferation reasons, we call on Japan to halt plans to start up the Rokkasho reprocessing plant and likewise end its dead-end program of continuously stockpiling weapon-usable plutonium. We support US-Japan cooperation in developing methods to dispose of

plutonium as waste and call on both countries to terminate plans to use MOX fuel in commercial nuclear power reactors.

SRS Watch is concerned that this material has been brought to SRS with no clear plan for its disposal and no explanation as to why plutonium from the UK and France are being brought here. That plutonium should go to the UK and France, both nuclear weapons states with large stockpile of plutonium.

The shipment of the plutonium to SRS without addressing japan plutonium stockpiling program and without having a well-defined disposal plan reveals that U.S. nuclear non-proliferation policies are in disarray. SRS Watch demands that DOE and the U.S. Government halt plans to bring more foreign plutonium to SRS until non-proliferation justification can be given and the disposal plan for 13 metric tons of plutonium now at SRS be presented,

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