Case Study – Dispute Resolution at SRS
Savannah River Site

- ~310 mi² adjacent to the Savannah River
- Constructed 1950s in support of national defense
- NPL site with 3-party FFA
High-Level Liquid Waste

- Generated as by-products from the processing of nuclear materials
- Approximately 35 millions gallons of waste stored in 43 underground carbon-steel waste tanks among two “tank farms”
- Greatest risk to human health and the environment in South Carolina
HLW Tank Cleanup & Closure

• March 2006, DOE requested an extension for Tanks 18 and 19.

• A non-concurrence was issued by South Carolina.

• October 22, 2007 – Dispute elevated to the DRC

• November 19, 2007 – Formal dispute resolved
Results of Formal Dispute

• Bulk waste removal and operational closure dates for each remaining tank created and documented in Appendix L of the FFA
• Annual Report
• Quarterly calls
More Disputes

• Delays in SWPF and programmatic issues
• More extension requests in 2014 & 2016 led to additional disputes
2014 Dispute

- Informal Dispute – 3 months
- Elevated to DRC
- Partially resolved in 28 days
- SEC resolved remaining issue in 46 days
2016 Dispute

- DOE extension request not approved
- Invoked informal dispute
- Multiple technical exchange meetings
- Resolved within 6 months
- Commitment for additional discussions
A New Approach

• Aggressive tank closure schedule no longer achievable
• September 2017 extension request
• Did not want to enter dispute again
• Parties agreed to suspending the milestones while furthering our shared interest in continuing risk reduction.
Finding Common Ground

• EPA and SCDHEC requested that DOE look at activities outside of the tank farms.
• Identified projects to accelerate for further risk reduction.
• Milestones suspended pending rerack.
• Signed by DRC although not a dispute.
Where are we today?

• The milestones are still suspended while SRS prepares for SWPF startup.

HOWEVER

• Work occurring on accelerated projects
• Milestones for the accelerated projects placed on the FFA
• DOE remains in constant communication with EPA and SCDHEC regarding the Liquid Waste program
Takeaways

• Make a good faith effort to resolve informally
• Elevate when necessary
• Stick to timeframes
• Look for common ground
• Be creative
• Make sure agreements are detailed
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